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W. HOWLAND. SC.

HELEN MORTON'S TRIAL.

By Cousin Alice.

With Engravings executed by William Howland,
From Designs by C. Mayr.

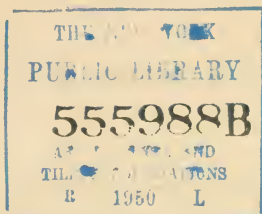
And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.—REVELATIONS xli. 4.

SIXTH EDITION.

311
New York:
GENERAL PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL S. S. UNION,
AND
CHURCH BOOK SOCIETY.
637 BROADWAY.

2182492

1009/2



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PODNEY & RUSSELL, Printers.

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## A SHORT LETTER OF INTRODUCTION.

THE simple story now given to the public was commenced for the amusement and instruction of a family of young relatives. This will account for the familiar style I have adopted, which was retained after it was decided to extend the little volume, so as to embrace the second topic,—“Christ the first fruits of the resurrection.”

My aim has been simply to bring before young minds this basis of our Christian faith, in the plainest and least involved manner it was possible to assume. That I have presented this in the guise of fiction, cannot be urged as an objection to the unpretending tale, by those who have noticed how much easier it is to arrest under this form, the sympathies and earnest attention of childhood.

That it may meet the approbation of parents, and interest “little children”

Is the only wish of its author,

ALICE B. NEAL

# Helen Morton's Trial.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE DEATH OF ANNIE.

LITTLE Helen Morton sat in her accustomed seat at church for the first time after the death of her twin sister Annie. She was very sad indeed, as she looked down upon her black dress, and upon the empty seat beside her. Only one month before, Annie had sat there, looking so well and happy; now she was asleep in the churchyard through which they had just passed. The tears came

into Helen's eyes as she thought how patient Annie was through her illness; she remembered that their kind physician had said, "Annie was almost an Angel even while on earth," and then she wondered what he could have meant, for all the pictures of angels that she had seen, represented them with wings drooping beside them, and she knew that Annie had no wings.

"Why does not Annie have wings, mamma, if she is an angel?" Helen had asked. Her mamma smiled sadly, and said, "they will soon be given to her in Heaven."

Then Helen knew that her little sister would die, though she could not quite understand what death was.

Only three days after, she had been taken into her mamma's room, (for Annie was removed there from the nursery when her illness first commenced) and though it was very dark, she saw that

something strange had happened. The white curtains were closely drawn about the little crib where Annie had slept, and her papa stood near looking very pale and unhappy. He took her up in his arms, and then her mamma, who was still sobbing, opened the curtains a little, and beckoned her to come nearer.

“Why does not Annie speak to me?” said Helen, for she was frightened to see her sister lie so still, and look so pale.

“She will never speak to us again, my darling,” said her papa, and her mamma stooped down to kiss Annie’s forehead, and whispered “She *is* an angel now.”

“Is this being dead?” asked Helen, very softly, for she thought her sister was asleep, and was afraid she might waken her.

It was not strange that Helen thought so, for Annie’s eyes were gently closed, and her hands were clasped together

as she had often slept. She was dressed in a white slip, very like the one Helen wore, and a rose-bud was lying by her cheek.

Yes, Annie was dead, although Helen could not understand it, and wondered why she did not wake the next morning, and the next.

“Annie will not wake now,” her mamma said, “but in the resurrection morn she will uncloze her eyes and live again.”

Helen had learned that “resurrection” meant to rise, or live again; and that the “resurrection morn” was the day when all who had ever died in the world, were to rise from their graves and be prepared for another life. She looked upon Annie who had been placed in a coffin, and thought her mamma must be mistaken, that Annie would sit up and speak to her. But the day for the funeral came, and she stood with her



mamma beside the grave in which the coffin was placed, and then she felt that death was very terrible, if all who died must be covered up in the ground away from the light and the fresh air.

When they were again seated in the carriage, she wished to ask how it was possible that Annie could rise from the grave ; but her mamma sobbed so bitterly, and pressed her so often close to her heart, that she forgot her question and sobbed too, as she felt the tears fall upon her face.

That was a very sad night to Helen, for the house was still and quiet, and the nursery seemed so lonely. Helen's baby brother was the only one in the house that smiled, for all had loved gentle little Annie, and even Nurse could not speak of her without tears. A week passed away, and Sunday morning, when the bells rang so sweetly, Helen walked with her papa to church. As they passed

along, through the trees, her papa had pointed out Annie's grave. She looked eagerly, but saw only a fresh mound of earth, without anything to distinguish it at the foot of the monument under which her grand parents were buried.

"How can they rise again," thought Helen once more, and she would have asked her papa, but they were just at the door of the church, and there was no time. As she listened to the beautiful chime of the bells she almost fancied that Annie must be sitting near her; but when she turned quickly the seat was still empty, and then the tears came to her eyes as she thought over all I have been telling you.

The bells had ceased, and the last strains of the organ had died away before she looked up again; then she heard the low, solemn voice of their pastor say, "*The Lord is in his holy Temple—let all the earth keep silence before him.*"

As she rose from her seat with the rest of the congregation, she knew that she had come there to worship the LORD, and she tried to put all other thoughts out of her mind.

## CHAPTER II.

---

“SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME  
UNTO ME.”

HELEN tried to fix her mind upon the solemn worship of God, and as she tried earnestly you may be sure that she succeeded. “I cannot help having wicked wishes,” said a little girl some years ago; and perhaps many of you have said the same.

Now, “wicked wishes” and wandering thoughts are the great temptations which many of us have to struggle against, and we have but one way to

resist such temptations. The Bible has given us a simple rule—

“Watch and Pray.”

“Watch,” lest such feelings become frequent. “Pray,” that they may be taken from our hearts.

But I did not intend to read you a sermon. Cousin Alice, much as she loves you and sincerely desires the happiness of you all, would only counsel you. She cannot reprove, for she, too, needs the advice which you have just read. We will now return to little Helen, in the quiet seat at church.

There were several things in the morning service which recalled to her mind the question she had so often asked herself. The sermon was upon Christ's blessing little children, and their pastor said that all who had been taken from the world in their early childhood, became in Heaven the peculiar care of

the Saviour. He repeated the text, "*Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.*" Then he looked around upon the children in the congregation before him with a smile of heavenly peace and purity, as he again said, "*Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.*"

Helen listened very earnestly, for he began to tell them of a little lamb that had been taken from the fold of earth in the last week. He told of the gentle child who had once been sitting in this very church. Of her patience through her illness, and that at last she had been taken from a world of suffering to be within Christ's fold on high—"A lamb now without spot or stain," he said, and Helen knew it was her sister Annie of whom he had spoken.

As they came out of church, some of Helen's little friends stood waiting with their mammas in the churchyard. They

came silently and kissed her, and all the ladies inquired affectionately for her mamma, and sent kind messages when they heard that she was quite ill. As one after another passed out of the gate they were left alone, and Helen wondered what her father was waiting for.

“Would you not like to go to Annie’s grave,” said he, at length, and then they walked together toward it.

They had been standing there but a moment or two, when Helen felt a gentle hand upon her own. It was their pastor, who was going across the churchyard to his home, and had come to them when he saw who they were. He took Helen up in his arms and kissed her very kindly, and when he saw the tears in her eyes he asked her if she had listened attentively to what he had said that morning. “If so,” he added, “you know that you will meet your little sister again; that is if you strive to obey God’s will

upon earth, and love him heartily. The GOOD SHEPHERD watches over little children, and he has taken your sister to be with him."

"*When* shall I see Annie again, sir?" said Helen, looking up anxiously in his face.

"When the dead shall rise from their graves on the blessed resurrection morn."

"Will you please tell me how they can rise out of the ground?" asked Helen. "Annie is in a coffin, and that is covered by a great deal of earth."

"I have not time now to explain to you what I mean, but if your mamma will allow you to come here to-morrow I will try to do so."

"She can come to you a little while in the afternoon," said Mr. Morton, "and will be very happy to, I have no doubt."

Helen thanked her papa, and their kind pastor, and then they walked slowly towards home. She ran into her mam-



ma's room to tell her about the promised visit, but her mamma was lying upon the sofa, looking so pale that Helen was quite frightened and silent. She held a little note in her hand, and Helen saw it had been sealed with black. Mrs. Morton did not open her eyes, which were swollen with weeping, until Helen's papa was quite close to her, and said sorrowfully,

“My dear wife, is not this regret almost rebellious?”

“I have a new grief,” said she, starting quickly. Then her tears burst forth again as she saw Helen; and put her arms closely about the frightened child.

Mr. Morton read the letter which she gave him, and then said to Helen, “Your cousin Mary is dead, my love.”

“Dead!” said Helen, wonderingly. “And will she go to Annie, then?”

“We trust so,” replied Mr. Morton, and then her mamma said, “My poor

sister, this was so very sudden—no warning—and her only child! She will be heart-broken.”

Helen had not seen her cousin Mary for some months, for they did not live in the same town. Mary was a little older than Helen, and a healthy happy-looking child, when she had last visited them. But children are not secure from death, even when most healthy in appearance, for Mary had been thrown from a carriage, and died in two days without even knowing her mamma, or speaking to her. No wonder that Mrs. Morton thought her sister would be heart-broken, for she had no other child than Mary.

After a time Mrs. Morton ceased to weep so bitterly. She was grieved for her sister, and then her own loss was recalled most strongly to her mind. She seated Helen by her side, and asked her about the sermon, and what Mr. Herbert (their pastor) had said to her after church.

Helen remembered a great many things in the sermon, and she asked her mamma's permission to visit Mr. Herbert the next afternoon. This was granted with a fond kiss, and then nurse came for her little charge. Mrs. Morton told her that she should go away from home early on the next morning, but that Helen would remain under her care. Helen was very thoughtful as she walked through the shaded garden with nurse, and then she begged to be called early on Monday, before light, if nurse awoke so soon. Nurse promised to remember it, and Helen took a small book from her pocket, and sat down in the arbour to read.

### CHAPTER III.

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#### THE STORY THAT HELEN READ.

HELEN, as I have told you, sat down alone in the arbour to read from a little book which she brought out in her pocket. This was the story which interested her so much.

Many hundred years ago there lived a little girl whom we will call Mary. I do not know if that was her real name, but it was the name of the mother of our Saviour, and as the little girl lived in the same country we will call her so too. Her parents were very wealthy, and she

was much indulged, and loved dearly, as you can well imagine. So she was waited on by many servants, and her mother, who was a noble lady, taught her daughter to treat them all kindly, and they loved her almost as much as her parents.

When she was nearly twelve years old Mary grew very ill. All the physicians in the city where she lived were called in ; but she still grew worse. There was sorrow in her father's house. Her mother never left the room except for a few moments at a time ; she watched over her patient little girl with much tenderness, and gave her medicine with her own hand.

The servants moved very carefully and quietly about the house, for they did not wish to disturb her, and more than one feared she never would be well again. At length the physicians told her father that there was no hope. They

had tried all the medicines of which they knew, and she still grew worse. Her father could scarcely believe that his darling little Mary must die, and he did not dare to tell his wife, for he feared it would make her very ill.

He went into the room where the little girl was lying. She looked up to him and smiled; but he saw that she was too weak to speak to him. While he was standing there very sorrowfully, thinking that might be the last day he should have a little daughter on earth, he remembered a cure that had been performed very lately. A man whom all said must die, had been healed by the touch of a strange person who had met him and blessed him.

He had heard this new and wonderful physician speak to the people; for great crowds followed him wherever he went. He remembered his mild and beautiful face, how kindly he looked upon those

that came to listen to him. Mary's father had heard that he never refused assistance to those who asked it, and all at once he resolved to go and beg him to cure his daughter. He told his wife of his resolution, and hurried away alone before she had time to ask him if the danger was so great. But he had hardly gone out of the house when she saw that Mary was much worse. She rose in the bed as if she was quite strong, and then fell back, pale and breathless, in her mother's arms. Her mother's frightened cry brought their nurse and several of the servants to the bed side. Alas ! little Mary was lying in her mother's arms, dead.

One of the servants, who had heard his master tell Mary's mother where he was going, ran after him at once to say to him it was of no use. He was followed by several who were about the house, and they found their master already com-

ing with this strange physician. Mary's father clasped his hands in agony when he heard that his daughter was dead, but the physician looked kindly on him, and told him not to fear.

When they came to the house every one was weeping, and some of the servants cried very loudly, and lamented the death of their little mistress. But they ceased when the physician passed through their midst, for he told them she was not dead but sleeping.

They did not understand this, for her own nurse and mother had said that she was dead, and they had seen her lying still and cold.

Mary's father led the way to the room where the mother was weeping beside her little daughter's couch. Then the door was shut, and for a few moments all who stood waiting in the hall listened intently. Soon there was a cry of delight, low sobs, and a confused hum of



voices in the chamber. At last the door was again unclosed, and to the delight and astonishment of all, Mary was seen, pale, but otherwise quite well. She was standing beside her mother, whose arms were close about her, and the eyes of both were raised to the good physician, who smiled upon them as he blessed them.

Perhaps you will say Mary was only asleep after all, and he had waked her! No; she had been dead, and it was our SAVIOUR who recalled her to life. No other living person has ever possessed this power. Those who die now, sleep in the grave until Christ shall again come to the earth in power and great glory, when he shall be our *Judge*, as well as our *Redeemer*.

Helen was very thoughtful when she finished this story, which my cousins have all read before, I hope, since it is related in the Bible. She wished that

the Saviour was now on earth, and then she thought how earnestly she would pray to Him to bring Annie once more to life.

She sat there thinking how happy it would make her mamma, and nurse and all of them, if it could be so, until it was time for afternoon service. Nurse gave Helen her dinner and then they walked to church together.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### HELEN'S LETTER.

You all remember, do you not? that Helen grew very thoughtful when she heard that her cousin Mary was dead, and her mamma was going to the funeral the next day, and that she begged Nurse to call her very early, although her mamma would not leave her until several hours after breakfast.

Nurse was as good as her promise, and at daylight on Monday morning she called the little girl, who was lying in a soft, sweet sleep. Helen started as if she

did not half like being wakened so early, and then some remembrance seemed to come to her mind, and she sprang from the bed, and asked Nurse to dress her as quickly as possible. Then she knelt beside the low crib, where Annie had once slept, and prayed as she had been taught to do, morning and evening, for God's blessing upon her parents and friends. She thanked her kind Heavenly Father for all his gifts to them, and for his watchful care through the night.

Are there any of my little cousins who forget this duty when they wish very much to run to their play in the morning? I fear it is sometimes so. We are all too frequently forgetful, and yet we never neglect to thank our earthly friends for their gifts to us. Who of you—would forget to thank your mamma for giving you a nice book on your birth-day. Would not your eyes sparkle, and your thanks be ready in a moment, yet our Heavenly Father

gives us daily more than our parents can ever give. Life, and health, beside all that comes to us from him more indirectly, our home, parents and friends.

I hope you will remember this sometimes when you wish to put off your prayers in the morning.

When Helen had said her prayers, slowly and reverentially, she wished Nurse to get her a sheet of writing paper, and as Nurse knew that she had always been allowed to have it, she brought the paper and a pencil from Mr. Morton's study, and asked Helen what she was going to write.

"A letter, Nurse," was all that the little girl said, and she began very hastily to form printing letters on the paper which had been given her. Helen could not write, but she had learn to copy the letters from the spelling book, and Annie and herself had often written little notes to each other in that way. She had

learned to spell very correctly, but she could not make the letters fast, and when she was called to breakfast, nearly two hours after, she had just finished the note and folded it.

She did not say anything about it to her mamma, as she entered the breakfast room, and bade her good morning, or to her papa, though he took her upon his knee and kissed her kindly. There was not much said at breakfast, for Mrs. Morton was very, very sad, and her husband looked distressed to see her so. Helen, too, was quiet, and seemed troubled about something, as if she had a secret which she was anxious to tell.

But she did not say anything about it then, or when she was alone with her Nurse in Mrs. Morton's own room. At last everything was ready for the journey. Mrs. Morton had locked her travelling bag, and the carriage was at the door. Just as she was putting on her bonnet

Helen gained courage to tell about the letter, and took it from her apron pocket.

“You said, dear mamma, that Cousin Mary would go to Heaven, where Annie is, and then they will be playmates as they were on earth. Will you not put this letter in Mary’s hand in the coffin, and then she will take it to Annie.”

Mrs. Morton clasped the little girl to her heart, and hot tears fell upon Helen’s forehead, as her mamma wept bitterly.

“Oh my darling, my darling,” said she, “no message of earthly love can reach you now! No word from us can tell you, my angel child, that you are unforgotten!”

Helen knew that her mamma was speaking of Annie; and she wondered why Mary could not take a message from them to her.

“Mr. Herbert will explain to you this afternoon, why we cannot have any certain knowledge of Annie, and why your

cousin could not take the letter," said Mr. Morton, much affected; "but if you will give it to your mamma, we will keep it as an evidence of your love for your sister."

Mrs. Morton pressed Helen again and again to her heart. Even after they were seated in the carriage Helen was lifted in that she might kiss her once more. Helen's baby brother was in the carriage, and Nurse's oldest daughter was going with them to take care of him. Helen was to stay at home with Nurse, who was to be housekeeper in Mrs. Morton's absence. They would be gone nearly a week, and Mrs. Morton gave Nurse many a charge for her little girl as they drove away.

When Mrs. Morton grew a little more composed her husband open Helen's letter, and read it to her. This was the letter •



DEAR ANNIE,

I want to tell You that We have not forgotten you. Mamma speaks of you Every day. Mr. Herbert is going to tell Me this Afternoon when you are coming back. I Cannot think how you can Come back, but he will tell me. I wish you would come some night and see me a little while. come softly, so as Not to wake nurse, for I have got something to tell You. do not forget me if your are So happy in Heaven.

your affectionate sister,

HELEN.

I give you the letter just as it was, with capitals and all, misplaced.

Mr. Morton was quite affected by it, and put it carefully away. After a long and weary ride they came to the village in which Mary's mother lived, and here we will leave them for the present.

## CHAPTER V.

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### THE VISIT TO MR. HERBERT.

HELEN felt very badly as the carriage drove out of sight, and cried bitterly when the last turn in the road hid her mamma from view. She knew that they would be gone several days, but her papa had charged her to try and act as if they were still there to watch over her, and to remember that though they could not see all that she did, the eye of her heavenly Father was ever upon her.

When she recollected this she tried to be more cheerful, for she knew that if

her mother had been by it would have pained her to see her little daughter weep. Nurse, too, tried to comfort Helen in her queer way, and reminded her that she was to visit Mr. Herbert, their kind pastor, that afternoon. Helen began to wonder once more how Annie could rise from the ground, and how she could be with Mary, when she had seen her laid in the churchyard.

When the shadows of the great elm trees that stood before the door began to lengthen, Nurse tied on Helen's light bonnet and put a clean linen apron over her black dress. They did not say much as they walked toward the Parsonage, and when they found Mr. Herbert was in, Nurse left Helen in charge of the housekeeper, promising to call for her before dark. Helen had often seen Mr. Herbert's housekeeper. She was a quiet, ladylike woman, older than Nurse, and somewhat formal—Helen said "prim"—

in manner, but she was kind hearted, and fond of children.

She led Helen through the wide, dark hall to the door of Mr. Herbert's study, and when she had knocked, Helen heard Mr. Herbert's pleasant voice say "come in."

The study was a very pleasant room, with glass doors on the side that led out into the churchyard, which was all that separated Mr. Herbert's house from the church. It is not often that parsonages are so conveniently situated, at least in this country, but Mr. Herbert, had been allowed to arrange every thing to please himself. The windows of this quiet room were shaded by large trees that were almost as old as the church, their long branches floated out upon the soft wind, and the leaves fluttered gently as they swayed to and fro. The shade of the trees made the study cool and dark, and

a vase of delicate flowers shed a pleasant perfume through the room.

Around the walls there were book cases made of oak, filled with heavily bound volumes. There were several books lying upon the floor, near the large chair in which Mr. Herbert had been sitting. Some of them were fastened by hoops and clasps of brass. Helen noticed one that was lying open upon a reading desk, and she saw that it was not printed like the books we generally see, but was written with a pen. Mr. Herbert afterwards explained this to her, that it was written in the Latin language many hundred years ago, before the art of printing was invented.

Mr. Herbert seemed very happy to see Helen, and after he had chatted with her awhile about her little brother, and her mamma's absence, he asked if she would not like to walk in the churchyard. To this she readily assented, for it was not

at all a gloomy place, but was cool and quiet, with flowers and shrubs by the graves.

Mr. Herbert went almost directly to Annie's grave, and sitting down beneath a fir tree that grew near, he placed Helen upon the grass beside him.

"When you wish that little sister could come back," said he, "is it your foot or your hand that makes the wish?"

Helen would have laughed at such an odd question, had it not been upon so sad a subject. As it was, she smiled a little when she answered,

"Neither, sir, my heart wishes it, I think."

"And what do you mean by your heart," asked Mr. Herbert.

"Mamma tells me my heart is here," said Helen, putting her hand upon her left side, "but when I wish, the thought does not come from there, only I say from my heart."

“Well, then,” said Mr. Herbert kindly, “your mind makes the wish. If your hand should be cut off, do you suppose you would wish it all the same.”

“Why not?” said Helen, wonderingly.

“Oh, then you think your hand has nothing to do with your thoughts.”

“No sir, I do not think it has.”

“Then we find, do we not, that the mind is quite distinct from the body, that it is another thing altogether. What other name do we sometimes give to the mind.”

“The soul!” said Helen, half afraid that she had not spoken rightly.

“Yes, the soul, and we are taught in the Bible that the soul can never die; where do you think the soul of your little sister is?”

“In Heaven,” replied the little girl, looking up reverentially to the blue sky above them as she spoke. Now she began to understand how Annie’s body could be in the ground and her spirit be

in Heaven. She knew that when they spoke of Annie in Heaven they meant Annie's soul, which was quite separate from the body. She told Mr. Herbert this, who seemed quite pleased but said—

“When we speak of the spirits of the dead as in Heaven—we must not confound it with the more perfect and entire happiness which awaits them, after the last great day, of final reward and punishment. We do not doubt that they enter at once upon a perfect repose. Our Lord told the dying thief he should be with him that same day in Paradise. This intermediate state, should more properly be called Paradise.\* But the future life of the good is almost always spoken of as Heavenly rest. You may remember coming to evening service once

\* It will be seen, that I have used the word “Heaven” instead of “Paradise” throughout the remainder of the volume. I have trusted to this explanation of its proper meaning, and adopted the more familiar word as better suited to my young readers.



while Annie was ill, and hearing the prayer that was offered for her. Here it is"—and Mr. Herbert read from a little prayer book—

“Or else receive her into these *heavenly* habitations, where the souls of those who sleep in the Lord Jesus, enjoy perpetual rest and felicity.”

“It is after the resurrection, that they may more properly be said to enter Heaven. And now—

Do you think it possible that your sister could come out of the grave again?”

Helen did not like to say no, although that would have been the true answer, for she could not understand it at all. While she hesitated, Mr. Herbert took a paper of flower seeds from his pocket and asked her if she knew what they were. She recollected that her mamma had planted some just like them in their own little garden only the week before Annie grew ill.

“What became of them?” asked Mr. Herbert, “are they in the ground still?”

“No, sir,” replied Helen, “for I watched every day, and at last a little green leaf came peeping up, and then two or three, and now it is quite a large lady slipper, for I looked at it this morning.”

Mr. Herbert did not seem to hear her reply, for he had taken a small Testament from his pocket, and was turning over the leaves. “Listen,” said he, and then he read—

*“But some man will say, how are the dead raised up! and with what body do they come?”*

*Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.*

*And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain.*

*But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, to every seed his own body."*

Here Mr. Herbert looked up and asked Helen if she understood what he had read.

"Does it not mean?" said she "that when mamma sowed the flower seeds there came up leaves and a stalk instead of the seed?"

"Yes," said Mr. Herbert, pleased that she had listened so attentively, and he then read again from the Testament.

*"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.*

*It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:*

*It is sown in a natural body; it is raised in a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body."*

"I have heard that very lately," said Helen, as Mr Herbert closed the book.

“Yes,” said Mr. Herbert, it is not long since I read it to you—“it is included in the burial service.”

“Ah, I remember it now,” and Helen’s face grew thoughtful as she spoke. “But I did not understand it the day Annie was buried, though I tried very hard to hear what you said.”

“Tell me what you understand by it now,” said Mr. Herbert.

Helen was fearful her idea of the meaning would not be correct, but she knew Mr. Herbert would not smile if she was wrong, and so she replied in a low voice—

“I think, sir, it means that our bodies are put in the ground just as mamma put in the flower seeds. Then, after a while, when the resurrection day comes, we rise again from the grave just as the little stalks comes from the seed. I wonder if we shall be as much more beautiful—if we have done good while we lived—as the flower is more beautiful than

the ugly brown seed. Do you think we shall keep on growing more and more lovely, just as my flowers do?"

"That is our hope, my good little daughter," was Mr. Herbert's reply. "And in one thing remember that we shall be far different from your garden blossoms. They begin to fade as soon as they become fully unfolded, and wither quite away; while our spiritual bodies can never grow old, but will continue beautiful and pure through an eternity of happiness. Do you think we should feel very badly to lay aside this life a little while for the sake of that joyful existence? or fear that this poor body should be put in the ground, when we know that we shall receive a new body, infinitely more lovely, when we arise again."

"Oh no, no;" said Helen eagerly, for now she did not dread death.

## CHAPTER VI.

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### MRS. MORTON'S RETURN.

WHEN Helen returned to the Parsonage with Mr. Herbert she found Nurse had already come for her. Mrs. Burnet, the housekeeper, had set out a little table in the study with a pitcher of nice milk, thin slices of freshly baked bread, new butter, a dish of honey, and some light seed cakes, of which Helen was very fond. Mr. Herbert and Helen then shared the repast, while Nurse waited upon them, well pleased to see her little charge so happy.

After it was over and Mr. Herbert had returned thanks, he kissed Helen good night, and she left the parsonage well pleased with her visit.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday passed, and then Nurse received a little note from Mrs. Morton, saying that she would be home on Friday afternoon. Her sister, Helen's aunt, would return with them, for her husband was away from home. He had gone to Europe a few months before, and her house was now so solitary that she could not endure to live in it alone. A room next to the nursery was to be prepared for her, and all the morning of Friday, Helen was busy in making preparations for the welcome return.

She dusted all the little trinkets that stood upon her mamma's dressing-table, and arranged the books neatly upon the shelves. Then she gathered the most beautiful flowers she could find in the

garden and made bouquets, which she placed in her father's study, her mother's room, and that which was intended for her aunt. She also looped back the muslin window curtains as she had seen her mamma do, and when everything was arranged to her satisfaction Nurse gave the little girl a nice fresh bath, and dressed her very neatly. There was still an hour or more to pass before the travellers would arrive, and this Helen employed in reading, as she sat in the deep window seat near her papa's study table. It was from that window that she could best see the road by which they would come.

At length she heard the rolling of wheels, and at last the heads of the horses were seen, and then the carriage came along the pleasant lane, in the shade of the elm trees.

Helen ran out upon the portico just as her papa sprang from the carriage. He stopped to kiss her, and then he assisted



her mamma and little brother, with his young nurse, to alight. Helen thought at first that her aunt Lee, for that was her name, had not come, but when she looked up after her mamma's long kiss, Mr Morton was almost carrying a lady up the steps of the portico, and though her long black veil was down, Helen knew that it must be her cousin Mary's mother.

"Is she sick, mamma?" asked Helen, as she saw how feebly the lady walked, and how heavily she leaned upon Mr. Morton's arm.

"She is not well," was the reply, "and is very unhappy. She will not be comforted for your cousin's death, and we could scarcely get her to come home with us. Your papa thought she would be happier here, and insisted on her leaving her lonely home, where there was none but the servants."

Helen was happy to see that her mamma looked much more cheerful than

when she went from home. Mrs. Morton had found her sister in a stupor of grief, and was obliged to forget her own sorrow, or at least to check it, as she tried to comfort the desolate mother. We are always comforted ourselves when we try to make others happy, and Mrs. Morton had become quite calm and resigned, as she saw how much greater was her sister's trouble than her own. She had two children left, and her husband was with her to share all her thoughts; while her sister was childless and her husband was far away in a foreign land.

Mrs. Lee insisted on going to her own room at once, and Mrs. Morton went with her. Helen lingered near the door for she was anxious to see her mamma again. But nearly half an hour passed before Mrs. Morton came out into the hall, and then she looked very much distressed; and as she kissed the little girl

she whispered to her to go in and watch beside her aunt until she came back.

Helen was somewhat afraid at first for the room was very dark, and her aunt was lying on the bed with her hair all falling around her, tossing and throwing her arms wildly about, while she moaned as if in great pain. Presently she began to murmur low words, and to sob. Helen stole near the foot of the bed and heard her aunt saying, "Oh, my child! Mary, Mary, are you gone forever! I cannot believe it—come back to me one moment! Speak one word to your poor mother!"

Then she would clasp her hands tightly together over her forehead, and sometimes toss them upwards in the air while she said, "my child! my child! gone, gone forever!"

Helen was unable to resist the desire she felt to say something that might com-

fort her aunt, and she put her arms tenderly around her and whispered—

“She will come back again; you will see her in a little while.”

Her aunt started up in the bed, and and said, “Who is it that tells me my child will be restored to me?”

“It is I, aunt, I,” said Helen. “Do you not know that Mary will rise again?”

When Mrs. Morton returned to the room, some fifteen minutes afterwards, Helen was seated on the bed beside Mrs. Lee, who had put her arms closely about the little girl. Helen held the bouquet she had taken from the dressing table, and was speaking earnestly, as she pointed to it. Mrs. Morton lingered a moment in the shadow of the curtains, and heard her say—

“Mr. Herbert told it all to me, dear aunt, and says that we shall grow more and more beautiful in the other world, and not fade away and die like the

flowers. Sometimes I think I should like to die very much, if it were not for making mamma feel bad, it would be so beautiful to have that new body. Don't you think it would be unkind for me to wish Annie could come back again to this wicked world, where she got sick, and used very often to cry, when she has gone all through the pain of dying, and is so much better off in Heaven, and will rise again with a new body?"

Just then Mrs. Morton came into the room, and Mrs. Lee looked up with a sad smile and said, "I have been very ungrateful to God. This child has given me the most beautiful of consolations. Mary will yet be restored to me."

As Helen repeated to her mamma what Mr. Herbert had taught her, the bereaved sisters wept in each other's arms, but from that time a calm resignation filled the hearts of both, as they looked forward to that hour when they

should once more meet the little ones from whom they were for a time separated.

I may sometime tell you more of Helen's childhood, for the present may God bless and keep you all, and may you learn with Helen "*the lesson of the resurrection and the life.*"

HELEN MORTON'S

**Trial.**

SECOND PART.

For as in Adam a'l die, even so in Christ shall  
all be made alive.—1 COR. xv. 22.

I am the resurrection and the life.—ST. JOHN xi, 25



# Helen Morton's Trial.

## SECOND PART.

### CHAPTER I.

#### HELEN MORTON'S HOME.

I DID not describe Helen Morton's home to you, when I was writing about her before. But it was a very beautiful home; and any one would have said so who could have seen it in the spring-time. The house did not stand on the street. There was a beautiful meadow, or lawn, in front of it, and all around this lawn a light, but strong iron railing. From the gate directly in front of the house, the

carriage road curved on each side, and came up to the door, in the form of a circle. On each side of the road there were large elm trees, and beautiful shrubbery was planted here and there.

The house itself was large and low. At least it would seem low to those who have always lived in cities, where the houses are often four stories high. There was a portico in front, supported with pillars, and around these there were vines and climbing rose trees trained. In the centre of the house were the parlours, and Mrs. Morton's own room; the little dressing room adjoining was used sometimes for a nursery. Mr. Morton's Library, or "the study" as it was usually called, was in one wing, and the dining room, and store room in the other.

Do you not think it must have been a very pleasant house? Perhaps you will wonder if any body *could be* unhappy there.

But you will find as you grow older, that no one can be happy simply because they are surrounded by beautiful things. Our pleasure depends more on our own dispositions, and wishes, than on a fine house, or a pleasant garden. I have known little girls who were much happier in a small house, far away in a dark court, than others of their own age who had a carriage to ride in every day. A fretful, discontented temper, will make us unhappy anywhere; while cheerfulness and good humour will make the humblest home delightful.

But perhaps you will think I am going to tell you Helen was discontented! She may have become so perhaps, for it is four long years since we saw her last. A great many things can happen in four years. Helen's baby brother Willie had grown to be a stout little fellow, who liked to have his own way, and make as much noise as he pleased. A little sister

slept in Willie's old cradle now, a pretty little baby with blue eyes, and soft curls. The baby's name was Louise; Willie called her "Lou."

It was a cold dark day in November, when our story commences again. The trees in front of the house, were tossing backward and forward in the wind. Their leaves were withered and fallen to the ground. Only the day before, they had all been gathered up, and carried away. The garden did not look very pleasant it is true, but in the house all was cheerful as could be; particularly in Mr. Morton's study, where the family had gathered an hour before tea-time. All were there but Louise; she was in the nursery with Jane, who had taken care of Willie when he was a baby. Nurse was her mother, but she did not live with them now; she was with her sister, who was sick and needed all her care.

Mrs. Morton sat before the grate in

which there was a bright fire, rocking Willie, who was not very well. Mr. Morton had drawn the study table up to one of the long windows, and was reading, although the sun had nearly set. Helen—ah there she is—in the other window, away from all the rest. She had drawn the curtain around her, and sat quite still, with her hands over her face. She has grown tall, and is larger. She is now nine years old, nearly ten.

Every now and then her mother turned silently toward her, and looked long and earnestly at the little girl. The tears came into her eyes at last, and she put Willie down upon the rug, and went to her. Helen did not look up as she came near, and smile, as she once did, and her mamma saw that the tears were streaming through her hands.

Perhaps you think Helen was in disgrace.

No: if she had been, Mrs. Morton would

not have stooped down and kissed her so fondly.

Helen put her arms around her mamma's neck and whispered with a sob, "Oh dear mamma, if I could only see you!"

Ah, that was it. Helen is now quite *blind*.

Think of it little girl, whose bright eyes are reading this page so easily. Does it not seem very terrible. Put your hands over your eyes for a minute, and just try to think how it would be if you could never uncloseth them again. I can almost see you open them quickly, with the fear that it might possibly be so. But nothing has happened. You can see your mother sitting at her work table, and there is your papa's portrait on the wall, and the plants in the window-seat. Ah yes, you are not blind; now think again of Helen Morton, who could not see even her mother's face.

“How did it happen?” you will ask.  
“Did she grow blind all at once?”

No, there were many weeks after her eyes had been dimmed, before even her mother knew it. Helen had been ill for a long time early in the summer. There was a fever very prevalent—scarlet fever some call it, because the face is covered with small pimples, that inflame or redden. Helen was very patient through all, and took medicine with very little trouble, although it was sometimes disagreeable. Two of her playmates died that spring with the same fever, and Helen thought she could never be sufficiently grateful to God for sparing her life. Louise was then but a few weeks old, and Helen often asked to see her, but was told that it was best not to expose the little thing to the danger of taking the fever. So it was a great source of amusement to lie quietly and try to imagine how her new sister looked.

One day she was quiet for a long time, and her mamma who was sitting in the room heard her sigh. Helen said she was not in pain, when Mrs. Morton asked if her head was aching. But she sighed again, and then she told her mamma, she was afraid she could not see as well as she had done. Sometimes it would seem as if motes or little specks, were dancing before her eyes, and then every thing would look as if there was a mist over it. Mrs. Morton was not much alarmed, for she thought her little girl might have fancied this. However she told Dr. Price of it the next morning, and he examined Helen's eyes carefully.

When they went into the study, he looked very grave, and said he could not tell whether there was any danger or not; he did not wish to alarm them, without cause. In about a week he told Mr. Morton that Helen was right, a *cataract* had commenced to form over each eye.



Now a cataract is a film, or veil as it were, that confines the sight as it grows over the eye, and at last destroys it completely. Sometimes it can be prevented if discovered in season, but none of the remedies applied seemed to relieve Helen.

The room grew darker and darker, and by the time she was able to leave it, she could scarcely find the way about the the house.

Helen did not like to speak about her eyes, after her mother had told her that for the present, at least, they could not be relieved. She felt certain that she would be entirely blind, and she tried to imagine how it would seem. Sometimes she would dream that she was so already, and then she would wake with a scream that often brought her mother to her bedside. It would comfort her a little when she found she could yet see the dear face of her mother, and yet she often sobbed

herself to sleep again, for Helen thought "the time will come when I cannot see her smile, or see papa, or Willie." She was very fond of Willie, and he of her. She played very nicely with his blocks, before she was ill, and taught him how to build houses and churches with them. But now she would sit all by herself, for hours, and Willie called her "cross."

Helen was not *cross*, but she was unhappy. It seemed to her very cruel that she should suffer in this way, and she hoped it was only for a little while. Although she had imagined, and even thought she would be blind, it came like a terrible shock, when she heard nurse Jane tell Willie one day, that he must not tease his poor sister, for she never would be well again and see like other people.

That night she did not sleep at all. A wicked, wicked feeling came into her heart, and she dared to blame her Hea-

venly Father, for taking the blessing of sight away.

I think most of you would have done the same, naughty as you may think it in Helen. When we are in health, and have the use of our limbs, we often forget to be thankful for the blessing. But as soon as sickness comes we are ready to murmur. Helen had been taught that our Heavenly Father watches over and loves us; but that night she said to herself, "God cannot love me, or he would not make me blind." She forgot the beautiful text in the Bible which tells us "whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth." If she had felt its meaning properly, she would have known that this affliction, was but a proof of God's love.

Two or three months had passed since that night. Helen was now entirely blind. But she was quite well, and might have found many things to make her happy, but for this sad disposition to complain.

Her mamma and Mr. Morton tried to think of everything that would interest her. Willie had learned that he must not teaze her. It was a beautiful thing to see the little boy move his playthings out of her pathway as she came along slowly, or leading her out upon the portico, if the day was bright.

She could now find her way about the house pretty well, and she often went up stairs by herself, feeling cautiously before her. There was one thing that surprised her. She could hear a great deal better, than when she could see. She could tell the step of any visiter, and learned to know them all by their voices, and movements. Her father explained to her that this often happened when people cannot see. The hearing becomes sharper, or as we say more *acute*; as they get accustomed to listen more earnestly.

Then too Helen sung very sweetly,

and her mother was always ready to accompany her upon the piano. She had learned more than a year before to "knit without looking on;" and that might have served to occupy her time.

But Helen chose to do none of these things. She knew it was wicked to indulge the feeling, yet she could not help feeling that God had punished her more than she deserved. She once told Mr. Herbert that she did not think she had been any more wicked than Jane or Willie, yet both of them could see. Poor child! She made every one around her unhappy by this disposition. It is almost always the case, that the wrong we do, makes our friends suffer nearly as much as we do ourselves.

Mr. Morton would look sad when he saw his little daughter indulge in this sullen feeling; and his wife often wept silently, when watching Helen in her loneliness.

## CHAPTER II.

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### HELEN'S CONVERSATION WITH HER MOTHER.

MRS. MORTON sat down in the low, deep window-seat beside Helen. She put her arms around the little girl, and you might almost have thought her an elder sister, instead of Helen's mamma. She looked very young and had long curls, like Helen's, only darker.

"Tell me what you were thinking about, Helen," said she.

"It was nothing new mamma. I think the same over and over again every day,

till my head fairly aches with it all. I was trying first to recollect how you look. Sometimes I can see you distinctly, and then again I cannot recollect at all. I heard you tell Willie that you thought little sister Louise was going to look like poor Annie. No, happy Annie! They are not blind in Heaven!"

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"—repeated Mrs. Morton reverently. "Was that what you meant Helen? I wish, my little daughter, that I had the power to wipe the tears and the dimness from yours," and she kissed the eyelids as she spoke, on whose long lashes the tears still trembled.

"I know mamma you cannot cure me, nobody can but God, and He forgets me, I am sure, or else He does not care how much I suffer."

"Helen, do you know what you are saying? Do you not feel already ashamed that so wicked, so rebellious a thought

could be spoken by you? If, as the Bible tells us,—‘the very hairs of our head are numbered,’—do you not suppose our Heavenly Father knew of your illness, or rather your suffering, and permits it?”

“But then if He does, is it not unkind, mamma? Was I a very bad girl before I was ill, to deserve it all? You did not punish me often I am sure, and you said I was very patient when I was ill.”

“Your blindness may prove a blessing rather than a punishment.”

“I think it must be a very strange blessing that makes me so unhappy.”

“Does not my daughter cause a great deal of her unhappiness herself?”

“Did I make myself blind? Why mamma! How can you talk in that way, when you know that I would give all the diamonds Sinbad the sailor saw, if I had them, just to see one little half hour.”

“Tell me Helen the most sorrowful thought you have.”



“Well then dear mamma, it's very hard as I said before, not to be able to see any of you. That I cannot once look at the trees and the flowers, or read one of my books,—or play with Willie.”

“Is this the worst Helen?”

“No, oh no, I should not mind it at all if it was only for a little while. If any body would promise me, that after a month or a year, or even a great many years mamma, I could see, I should not mind it a bit. I would be just as patient! But when I lie alone in the night, (I do not sleep as well as I used to) I begin to think about growing up so. I know as long as I live with you and papa I shall have somebody to love me and take care of me. But you might die before me! I have prayed sometimes that I might die the very day you did mamma, and be buried in the same coffin. I would not mind being buried in the dark ground then.”

Helen began to sob bitterly. She had grown excited, or *nervous* as we sometimes call it, thinking over these things. She laid her head in Mrs. Morton's lap and cried so pitifully, that Willie came and stood beside her, stroking down her curls, and saying, "poor sister Helen!"

Willie himself looked almost ready to cry, he loved his sister very dearly.

"Helen," said Mrs. Morton gently—"did you not say God permitted you to become blind."

"Yes mamma."

"And it was He who gave you a pleasant home, and parents ready and willing to do anything that might make you happy. Do you not think He is able to provide for you in the future just as well as now?"

"Perhaps so,—I do not know though,—I suppose He can."

Helen did not feel like being very ami-

able, and she rather sobbed than spoke her answers.

“Then there is a little want of *faith* in God's goodness mixed with *all* your thoughts, is there Helen?”

“Well mamma,” answered the little girl sitting up again by her mother's side. “Just think about it yourself. Just think what if you could never see me again, or papa or the baby, or Willie. Not for ever and ever, as long as you lived! Then you could not play so sweetly, or even read. I should have to lead you about,—that is I mean if I could see! and you could never walk in the pleasant woods, or even go to church. You like to go to church so much!”

“But you can go to church my dear whenever you like. Your papa or myself would lead you carefully, or if you did not like to walk, you might go in the carriage.”

“But I don't like to go to church *now*.”

You know I went when I first got well. First I could not see Annie's grave, when papa led me through the churchyard. That made me feel badly. Then I heard you all find the place in the prayer-book, and I felt quickly for mine, then I remembered that I could not read it. Though I knew all the prayers, or a great many of them. When Mr. Herbert began his sermon I wanted so to see him, and then I began to think how terrible it all was, and I cried, so I did not hear a word of what he said.

Afterwards when we were coming out of church you stopped to speak to Mrs. Price, and I heard somebody say—"poor little girl, she's quite blind." That made me feel worse than ever. I can't bear being *pitied!* No I don't like going to church at all, and I am glad you don't ask me to go now, where anybody can see me and pity me." Helen spoke almost angrily, and Mrs. Morton looked

graver than ever. She saw how determined Helen was not to be happy, and she did not know what to say to show the little girl how wrong she was. At last she said—

“You think your eyes will never see again, do you my dear?”

“Don't you think so too mamma?”

“I am afraid you are right, and I know how painful the thought must be. But if it is decided in your mind that you must always be deprived of certain pleasures,—is it not better to begin to think of what you *can* enjoy. You remember your favorite story of Robinett, who tried to make the best of everything.”

“Yes, oh yes, it was so funny where he had only a little soup left for supper, and he thought it was so grand!”

“Was not that a great deal better than if he had sat still and cried about the meat and vegetables he had lost?”

“Why certainly, mamma!”

“Which does my little daughter do?”

This was a new view of the subject for Helen, but she was not disposed to acknowledge she was wrong.

“But that was quite a different case,” she said slowly.

“Yet it is a fair comparison. You know that there are a few of the many means of happiness which you once enjoyed, taken from you. Still you have a great many left. Here, there is no comparison between you and Robinett,—for he had so little remaining.

“You cannot read, but you have an excellent memory, and there is always some one at leisure to read to you. You can sing, and knit, and hold little Louise. By and by you will be able to walk in the garden by yourself, and you can smell the beautiful flowers if you cannot see them. You can feel the sunshine, and the pleasant wind, in summer. Oh,

there are a great many things my little girl can do to be happy."

"I did not think of all this before."

"No, and perhaps you did not think that people who are idle have more time to indulge in murmurings. If you were busy, you would not go over and over all your trouble, until the tears came in spite of yourself."

"Dear, kind mamma, I *will* try to be a better girl."

"I am sure you will, my daughter. And you must remember besides this, that your papa and myself are sad when you are so. 'No one can suffer alone,' is an old proverb, but a very true one."

"I hear papa's step now," said Helen quickly.

"Yes, he and Willie have been having a fine romp on the piazza while we were talking."

Just then Willie burst into the room to call them to tea.

He was in high spirits, and seized Helen's hand to lead her off. Willie called her his prisoner, and said he did not intend she should escape. She did not show the least desire to do so however, and they walked peaceably into the dining room together.

The blazing grate, and the solar lamp, made the tea table look very pleasant. Helen could not see it, true, but the warmth of the fire was agreeable, and Mr. Morton began to talk kindly to her after he had said grace.

Altogether she had not felt so happy in a long time, and Mrs. Morton thought she began to look quite like herself again.



### CHAPTER III.

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#### THE BEAUTIFUL POEM.

AFTER tea was over, Willie called Jane, to come to prayers. It was Jane's duty to ring the prayer bell directly after tea. Sometimes Jane forgot it, and Willie rather liked that, for then he was allowed to swing the great bell himself. It was not Willie's fault, if the servants did not hear, when *he* rang it.

Mr. Morton always read prayers in his study. The reason that they met there directly after tea, instead of waiting till bed time, was, that the children might

be present. Willie was never allowed to be up after eight o'clock ; his seat was a little otoman by his mother.

The servants were in a row before the fire, and Helen was near her papa. Mr. Morton read very solemnly, and distinctly, and Mrs. Morton, with the rest, responded.

After prayers, Willie kissed his papa and Helen good night, and Mrs. Morton went up stairs with him to his own little room next to Helen's. Jane always slept near them, and if either wanted anything in the night, they had only to speak and she was there in a minute.

After Willie was in bed, Helen asked her mamma to sing for her a little while, and they went into the parlour where the piano stood. Helen wished to hear "The Blind Boy." It is a very beautiful song, and she had often asked for it lately. But it is sad, for the little boy laments that he cannot see, and the music is sad too. After what Helen had

told her that evening Mrs. Morton did not think best to play it.

She told Helen so, and promised that instead, she would read her a beautiful poem, from an English Magazine which had come that day. Then she began to play some waltzes Helen liked very much. Some of them were so lively that you wished to dance, while you listened. Others were mournful and almost solemn. Helen never listened to these, without tears, for music had a great power over her, and her mamma played with much feeling.

When Mrs. Morton had finished, and closed the piano, she told Helen these waltzes had been written or composed by Louis Beethoven. He had lived in Germany, but was dead now. When he was composing his most beautiful music, he became entirely deaf, Mrs. Morton said.

Helen looked grave at this. "Why

mamma," said she, "and he could not hear even his own beautiful music, and he must have loved music so dearly! Oh, that is a great deal worse than my being blind!"

This was exactly what Mrs. Morton had intended. Our own troubles often seem to grow lighter, when compared with what others suffer. Helen was so busy with thinking about the poor man who could not hear his own music, that she forgot to ask her mamma for the poem. However Mrs. Morton had remembered it, and when they had returned to the study, she found the book in which she had read it.

Helen sat upon Willie's little otoman, and laid her head on her mamma's knee. She was very fond of this position.

Perhaps some of you have heard the poem before. But Helen had not, and she listened very attentively while Mrs. Morton read.

## THE BLIND BOY AND HIS SISTER.

BY MARY HOWITT.

“OH Brother,” said fair Annie,  
To the blind boy at her side ;  
“Would thou could’st see the sunshine lie  
On hill and valley, and the sky  
Hung like a glorious canopy  
O’er all things far and wide !

“Would thou could’st see the waters  
In many a distant glen ;  
The mountain flocks that graze around ;  
Nay, even this patch of stony ground,  
Those crags with silver lichens crowned,  
I would that thou could’st ken !

“Would thou could’st see my face brother,  
As well as I see thine ;  
For always what I cannot see  
It is but half a joy to me.  
Brother I often weep for thee,  
Yet thou dost ne’er repine !”

“And why should I repine Annie ?”  
Said the blind boy with a smile ;  
“I ken the blue sky and the grey ;  
The sunny and the misty day,  
The moorland valley stretched away  
For many, and many a mile !

“ I ken the night and day Annie.  
For all ye may believe ;  
And often on my spirit lies  
A clear light as of mid-day skies ;  
And splendors on my vision rise  
Like gorgeous hues of eve.

“ I sit upon the stone, Annie,  
Beside our cottage door,  
And people say, ‘ the boy is blind,’  
And pity me, although I find  
A world of beauty in my mind,  
A never ceasing store.

“ I hear you talk of mountains  
The beautiful, the grand ;  
Of splintered peaks so grey and tall ;  
Of lake, and glen, and water-fall ;  
Of flowers and trees,—I ken them all,  
Their difference understand.

“ The harebell and the gowan  
Are not alike to me,  
Are different as the herd and flock,  
The blasted pine tree of the rock,  
The waving birch, the broad green oak,  
The river, and the sea.

“ And oh, the heavenly music  
That, as I sit alone,  
Comes to mine inward sense as clear

As if the angel voices were  
Singing to harp and dulcimer  
Before the mighty Throne.

“ It is not as of outward sound,  
Of breeze, or singing bird ;  
But wondrous melody refined ;  
A gift of God unto the blind ;  
An inward harmony of mind,  
By inward senses heard.

“ But better far than this Annie,  
Is when thou read'st to me  
Of the dear SAVIOUR meek and kind  
And how He healed the lame and blind,  
Am I not healed ?—for in my mind  
His blessed form I see !

“ Oh, love is not of sight Annie,  
Is not of outward things ;  
For in my inmost soul I know  
His pity for all mortal woe ;  
His words of love, spoke long ago,  
Unseal its deepest springs !

Then do not mourn for me Annie,  
Because that I am blind ;—  
The beauty of all outward sight ;  
The wondrous shows of day and night ;  
All love, all faith, and all delight,  
Are strong in heart and mind.”

Helen was weeping silently long before Mrs. Morton finished reading this.

Her mamma did not attempt to check this, for she saw the tears were a relief to that poor little heart. When the book was closed, Helen put her arms about her mother's neck, and said,

“I am afraid I have been very wicked. I did not think I was though. What a beautiful poem, and what a dear little boy.”

“I thought you would like it my love” — “And mamma, I am better off than he was, for I have seen all these things, the mountains, and the trees, and the flowers. I can remember how they all looked and he could'nt, if he had tried.”

“And now, will you not think of this sometimes when you are tempted to complain.”

“I shall never forget it mamma. Still it is very, very hard, not to see you.”

“I think you will try to be more pa-



tient," answered her mother. "And now it is time you were dreaming, rather than thinking."

So Helen's papa, bade her good night, and Mrs. Morton led the little girl up stairs herself. She assisted her to undress, and then Helen knelt at her feet and said her evening prayer. After that, Mrs. Morton put her hand gently on Helen's head as she still knelt, and said, "God bless you and keep you my daughter." Helen had no greater punishment than to be denied this nightly blessing. It was never refused, except when she had done wrong.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### MR. HERBERT'S SERMON.

THE next day was Sunday. This was always quiet, but yet pleasant, at Mr. Morton's. Every Saturday evening all the work-boxes and baskets, were put away, and the books they had read through the week, carried into the study, and placed in their proper position in the book-cases.

There was an air of peculiar neatness about the whole house. Many families, rise at a later hour on Sunday, than any other day. But at Mr. Morton's the first bell rang at the usual hour, as Mr. Mor-

ton once told Jane, "we have no more right to waste God's time in sleep, than our own."

Then every one, was dressed cleanly and neatly. The servants were never obliged to do more than was absolutely necessary. Mrs. Morton was not like some ladies we have seen, who are satisfied in making a day of rest for themselves, and oblige their households, to do even more than is usual. It is made a feast day by them, but Mrs. Morton had everything prepared for a plain dinner on Saturday, so that the cook could take her turn in going to church.

Prayers came before breakfast, on Sunday morning, and after breakfast Mrs. Morton taught the children, Helen and Willie, in her own room, for half an hour; and then she read them some pretty Bible story until it was time to get ready for church. Mr. Morton read in the study, at this time, and the servants

were all busy, that they might have the rest of the day to themselves.

The lesson this morning was very interesting, and Helen listened with much attention. When they were through, Mrs. Morton sent Willie to Jane for his hat, as it was nearly church time. Helen went out into the hall with him, but came back, after a moment, and stood by her mamma's side, as if she had a request to make. Mrs. Morton had resolved that she would not for the present at least, say anything more to her about going with them. She preferred showing Helen gently how wrong it was to stay away, and leave it to her own conscience. She did not think the worship of God, would do good to any heart, full of complaining and unhappiness; or to any one *compelled* to enter His "Holy Temple."

She was therefore somewhat surprised at Helen's request, to be taken with Willie, to the morning service.

“Do you really wish to go Helen,”—said she, “or do you ask this because you think it will please me.”

“I really wish to go,” replied Helen. “If you will lead me yourself mamma.”

“Certainly” Mrs. Morton said, and she was very much pleased with Helen’s cheerful manner.

Helen sat that morning in the very seat, in which we first made her acquaintance. She stood up with the rest of the congregation when Mr. Herbert’s voice was first heard, and her sweet voice joined in the anthems. Helen knew them all, for her mamma, often sung them on Sunday evening at home, and she always liked Helen to sing with her. She tried to fix her thoughts steadily upon the Psalms for the day, and when Mr. Herbert came to the second lesson she did not need to *try* and be attentive.

It was a very interesting lesson to her,

for what should it be about but the blind man, that Jesus healed.

You have all read this many times I suppose. But get your Testament now and look it over again. You will find it in the tenth chapter, of the Gospel of St. John. If you have it fresh in your minds you can understand this chapter better. Helen was thinking about this all through the Psalm which followed the prayers. It was a very beautiful Psalm, too, commencing—

“Thy presence Lord hath me supplied.”

Helen thought how delightful it must have been for the blind man to find that he could see. He was like the little boy in the poem her mother had read. He was born blind. And then his parents must have been so astonished, and his mother particularly. Helen thought, besides, how happy her mamma would be if any one should cure her so unexpectedly. Then she remembered how she

had wished the Saviour had been here to bring little Annie to life again. There are no miracles now, and Helen knew that she could not be cured just in a moment, as it were.

But the communion service had commenced, and she tried to bring her thoughts back again to the church and what she was doing.

After the hymn, Mr. Herbert began to read a part of that very chapter again, as the text of his sermon. He read several verses, but when he spoke, he dwelt most particularly on the verse—

*“ He answered and said. Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; but one thing I know,—that whereas I was blind, now I see.*

Then he paused for a moment and rehearsed, or repeated the story. He bade them imagine the poor man who had never seen the light of day, sitting at the way-side on a bright morning in early

spring. The soft breeze lifted his matted hair, and the sunshine fell pleasantly upon his face. He could feel its warmth, but he could not see how it made everything more beautiful: how it glittered on the tops of the distant mountains, and brightened the rustling foliage; or danced in the tide of the little brooks, that watered the neighboring vallies.

Perhaps he was wishing that he could see all this, as he sat there alone. It may be that this wish brought the sudden resolution of seeking help where he heard it was to be found. He knew that Jesus was in the city, for he had been told how the stranger went to the temple, and taught those who crowded to hear him. Once he himself had listened to the gentle voice that had plead with them so kindly, to forsake their sins.

It may have been while he was thinking of this, that the Saviour and his disciples came near. He heard them speak



of him, even while he was hesitating in this very manner. The Saviour came still nearer. He spoke to the blind man. His hands were pressed for an instant on those poor sightless eyes. And while the sufferer wondered at this kindness, so unlooked for,—he was told to “go wash in the pool of Siloam.”

The Saviour did not make him a promise that if he did he should see. But he simply commanded him to go. There was no reward held out,—but the man did not hesitate. Doubtless he was ridiculed as he hastened away. Many perhaps called him “a fool” for even listening to the “Great Physician.” But he might have said to them,

“Laugh as much as you like. You can never feel as I have felt this morning. You have never prayed to look out upon the sky, and the earth, even if it was only for a moment. You can remember your parents, from the time you can recollect

at all. I have never seen my mother's face. It may do no good, but it is my only hope of relief. If you had suffered as I have, you too would be ready to do anything which would hold out the least possibility of a cure."

There was one listening to Mr. Herbert's words who felt how very true they were. He did not even know she was in the church, but if he had intended his sermon for her, he could not have chosen anything more interesting.

"Yes" thought Helen, "the blind man was right. If any person would tell me that I might possibly get well, I would do anything they wanted me to, however odd it might be. That is if I believed they spoke the truth. It's true the Saviour did not tell him he would see, but I'm sure he must have *felt*, that was what he was to wash in the pool for. Oh, if I could only find the Saviour anywhere, I'd walk from here to India, or just as far as

I could go, to find him. He wouldn't refuse to make me see, I am certain. I would ask him so humbly"—

And then Helen began to listen to Mr. Herbert again. He was speaking of the unquestioning faith of the blind man.

He said that our greatest sorrow was most often caused by our greatest sin. That the greatest sin of the age was a want of faith. We forget, that with God nothing was impossible. Then he spoke of some of the good people we read about in the Old Testament, and pointed out in what way their trust in God had saved them. He told his hearers to look into their own hearts and see if a want of this belief in God's parental goodness and wisdom, was not the first reason of all their troubles. Those who were grieving for the death of friends would find that their murmurs at the loss was more bitter, than the simple feeling of the loss itself. So of those who had been deprived of pro-

perty, or comfort, or health. A want of faith made many cease to pray, and kept some from the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

He said a great deal more, that Helen did not understand so well. Partly because she did not listen with so much interest as at first. She said to herself—"I'm sure the cause of my sorrow is that I cannot see. A want of faith did not make me blind." And she began again to murmur, that she had been so "punished" as she called it. She did not think she deserved it at all.

As they came out of the church, Helen's sadness and ill humor seemed to have increased. Her mamma saw her bite her lip, when Mrs. Price asked her if she was getting better, and when Amelia Price took her hand, and said "dear Helen won't you come and see me now?" She drew away rudely. She only thought—"Amelia said that to tease

me. She knows I can't see anybody." But Helen was wrong. Her little playmate pitied her it is true, and she wished to do something to make her happier. Helen would not speak to her again but said "come mamma, I'm in a hurry to get home!"

Mrs. Morton led her carefully along. Neither of them spoke for some time. Mrs. Morton was grieved that the gentleness of the morning had disappeared so soon, and her little daughter grew more and more sullen as they drew near home.

At dinner Mr. Morton remarked that Mr. Herbert would dine with them the next day. Before Helen's illness she had always enjoyed Mr. Herberts visits. Of late she avoided every one, and she now determined that she would not see Mr. Herbert at all. She thought she would stay in the nursery with Jane, while he was in the house. She could say that she did not want any dinner, and though

she knew that would trouble her mamma, she resolved to do so.

She did not know why it was, but she did not wish to see Mr. Herbert or even to hear his voice. Perhaps she knew he would think she was feeling wickedly, if he could read her heart. Why is it that children, and grown people too, so often avoid their friends when they know they have deserved their displeasure? Yet they are constantly in God's presence, with their hearts full of sin. They do not seem to think or care for this. He is surely our best friend, and we never *can* conceal anything from him, even if we wish to. If this thought was constantly before us we could not so often offend one who loved us so well.

## CHAPTER V.

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### HELEN'S GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

“IT is nearly dinner time” said Mrs. Morton to Helen. “I heard Mr. Herbert’s voice in the hall just now, and I must go down to see him. Jane will brush your hair, and then you can come to the study. You can come by yourself now, can you not?”

Helen thought of the resolution she had made the day before. “I don’t wish any dinner to day mamma,” she said quickly. “I’d rather stay here in the nursery with Jane.”

“Are you ill Helen.”—

“No not very, that is I only don't feel well,” and this was true, for Helen's ill temper had made her feel so disagreeably; that it was almost as bad as being sick.

“But you would like to see Mr. Herbert, surely, my dear. Never mind though, if you are not well,” and Helen felt quite relieved as she left the room without enquiring particularly about her illness.

She sat down near the door, and leaned her head upon her hands. Presently the dinner bell rung. Then the study door opened, and she heard them cross the hall. Willie's little foot-steps pattered close behind Mr. Morton, and Mr. Herbert was speaking to her mother. The nursery as I said before, was near the wing which was occupied as a dining room, so any time the door was opened, Helen could hear quite plainly.

They seemed to be enjoying themselves



so well, that Helen grew more and more miserable. When she remembered the pleasant anecdotes Mr. Herbert sometimes told, and how kindly he always spoke to her she wished that she had gone with them as usual. Then a wicked whisper came to her heart that said, "Only hear how happy they are without me. They don't care how badly I feel. They can *see*, and they don't once think of me, sitting here all alone. Everybody seems just the same, they never miss me at all."—

Helen was mistaken. Mrs. Morton's usual cheerfulness, was clouded by her daughter's determined absence. She understood a part of the feeling that made her resolve not to go to dinner. Mr. Herbert had asked for her,—and even when they rose from the table he said again "I am sorry to miss my little favorite."

Helen heard him say this as they came

out into the hall. But what was her fright when her father replied,

“Helen is in the nursery, is she not my dear? Perhaps Mrs. Morton will allow us to be privileged intruders for once. Will you look this way Mr. Herbert?”

She could not escape. Her father's hand was on the lock of the door as he spoke; and before she could move it was open. Her heart beat so fast that she could scarcely speak. Her father said—  
“My little one *does* look pale and ill, but Mr. Herbert will cheer you I have no doubt.”

After a moment Mr. Morton left the room with her mamma, something having happened that they needed to be consulted about and much to Helen's dismay, she was left alone with Mr. Herbert. Yet he was not at all severe or cross. On the contrary he sat down beside her and began enquiring about her amusements. Then he said he had been much pleased

to hear she had been at Church the day before, and asked her if she was interested in the sermon, and if it was plain enough for her to understand.

Helen suddenly resolved to tell him how miserable she was. At first she had been sullen, and would not answer at all, but her stubborn spirit seemed melted when Mr. Herbert spoke so gently. She told him how she had feared being blind. How unhappy she had been from the time that she knew there was no help for her. She did not keep back any of the wicked thoughts that she had listened to; and then she repeated much of her conversation with her mother, on the Saturday evening before.

“I felt a little better then,” she said, as she placed her hand confidently in Mr. Herbert’s—“And on Sunday morning I thought I would try to go to church, and not mind being looked at and pitied. The story of the man who was blind.

seemed to bring back all my wicked thoughts. It seemed so cruel in God to let me suffer so much, when He could cure me quite as easily as the man had been. I wondered how I had been so wicked that I needed to be punished."

"Do you forget" said Mr Herbert, "that in the very first part of the story, our Saviour expressly says, that the man he healed was not guilty of any particular sin? Your blindness may be given as a blessing instead of a punishment."—

"How *can* it be a blessing!"—said Helen in astonishment.

"Would you not call it a blessing if it taught you that faith in the love and atonement of Him who cured the blind man, without which it is impossible to enter Heaven?"

"Do you mean sir, if it made me a *real* Christian?"

"Yes my dear: that is, a true child of God; contented with all He sees fit

you should pass through ; striving every day and hour to imitate the example given us in the life and teachings of His Son, and believing that for His sake your sins will at last be pardoned."

"Mr. Herbert I sometimes used to think if I could only please God, and be sure of going to Heaven—Annie *is* in Heaven—I would be willing to suffer all the terrible things mamma reads about in the great book of the Martyrs. Sometimes I have prayed that God would let me be tormented in that way, that He could see how much I wished to be a Christian."

"My dear little girl, you are required in God's love, to pass through none of those fiery trials, in order to prove your sincerity. He does not usually make our trials visible. But what you have said reminds me of something a good man, Bishop Wilson, wrote, many years ago. He says—"God no sooner discov-

ers in your heart an ardent desire of well-doing, and of submitting to His will, but he *prepares* for you occasions of trying this disposition." Now how can we tell but that God saw your motive was sincere, and sent this very blindness to prove it."

"It's very strange. I never have thought of that, Mr. Herbert. I've always been trying to see what I was punished for."

"Bishop Wilson says besides what I told you,—“Therefore confident of His love, receive cheerfully a medicine prepared by a physician that cannot be mistaken, and cannot give you anything but what will be for your good.”

"It sounds just as if it had been written for me."

"That thought has come to a great many hearts as they read words from his pen. But will you remember this when you are tempted to think God does

not love you, and be more patient than you have been?"

"But I promised mamma, that I would be a better girl; and see how naughty I was right away."

"When you made the promise, did you ask our Heavenly Father for strength to keep it?"

Helen turned away and was silent. "I think you did not remember to do so" continued Mr. Herbert. "And perhaps that is the reason you so soon broke it. Remember Helen that it is not enough that we ask God's assistance once; but we must renew our requests, particularly at the moment of temptation. If we break our good resolutions we should only be the more earnest in renewing them. Do not be discouraged that you have failed once."

Mrs. Morton returned to the room while Mr. Herbert was speaking. So he kissed Helen, as he bade her good bye, and

said if she would like, he would come in again in a day or two, and finish their conversation. Helen thanked him eagerly, and her mamma was made happier by the cheerful tone in which she spoke.

As Mrs. Morton did not hear what had been said, she did not understand why Helen went to her own room a few minutes afterwards. But had she followed, she would have seen the little girl kneeling by the bed-side, and praying earnestly for strength to keep her good resolutions.



## CHAPTER VI.

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### MR. HERBERT'S VISIT.

HELEN was visibly much more cheerful after the conversation I told you of in the last chapter. She seemed to learn almost as much in the two hours, Mrs. Morton devoted to her daily,—as when she had studied her lessons regularly.

This was Mrs. Morton's plan. She would read over the lesson carefully, explaining it as she did so. Then Helen told her what she recollected about it, and afterwards Mrs. Morton read it again. Every day they reviewed the lesson last

learned. Helen was fond of history, particularly, and sometimes she thought she recollected it better than when she read it for herself. There was little to call off her attention, that was one thing. She would go over and over the chapter for the day, when she was left by herself, until it was fixed in her mind.

After the first hour's lesson which was in the morning, Helen often sat by the cradle of little Louise, while Jane assisted her mamma in household duties. Sometimes she held the baby for hours together, when she was awake. Louise rarely cried, and was remarkable for lying with her eyes wide open, and fixed upon the light, as if she was in deep thought.

Then Helen could knit very evenly. She was now busy with a blue and white worsted scarf, that was to be a Christmas present to Willie. Her mamma had promised to make the fringe for it.

Christmas was very near. All the visit-

ers who came in had something to say about it. Some of the ladies were purchasing presents for their children. Others were going to assist in dressing the church with Christmas evergreens. They wished it to look very beautiful this year, and they came to consult Mrs. Morton who had excellent taste.

Helen was surprised to find how much interested she was in all these little preparations. The more she worked the less she thought of her trouble. Sometimes it would not come into her mind for hours together, as she sat knitting, knitting, as fast as her fingers could fly. She finished Willie's scarf, without his having discovered that she was at work upon it at all. Then her mamma allowed her to knit one for Jane from the worsted that was left. Helen had unconsciously discovered the grand secret of cheerfulness. This is industry. We can never be happy, or good as long as

we are idle. Wicked thoughts have room to come into our minds, and then we fret and complain over any little trifle.

One day Helen had been sitting by Mrs. Morton for a long time without speaking. At last she said—

“ Please, dear mamma, will you take the prayer-book and read me the burial service ?”

This was so strange a request, that Mrs. Morton hesitated for a moment. But she knew that Helen always was a singular child, and since her blindness she had been more thoughtful than ever.

She made no remark about it, but took a little prayer-book from her work-basket and read the beautiful service, slowly and solemnly. She felt all its sadness, and its consolations, for she had heard it by the graves of many dear friends, and it had comforted her when Annie had been laid at rest in the church yard.

Helen did not speak until her mamma

had finished it. Then she said, "It is the Saviour who says in the first verse you read—'I am the resurrection and the life.'—Is it not, mamma?"

Mrs. Morton read the verse again.

*I am the resurrection and the life saith the Lord; he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*

"Yes my dear, these are the words of our Redeemer,"—she said as she closed the book.

"Mr. Herbert explained to me once, how it was possible for the spirit to be in Heaven, and the body in the ground. We talked about the resurrection then. It was just after Annie died, don't you remember it?" asked Helen.

Mrs. Morton looked sad. Even now she could not hear Annie's name mentioned without a pang of sorrow. Often and often as she looked at Helen she had

thought "So would my Annie have been. They would have grown in beauty together, and Helen would never have felt her blindness so severely with a constant companion of her own age." But she never spoke sadly of the lost child, and now Helen did not know that she had contracted her brow suddenly, as if in pain,—for Mrs. Morton replied in her usual tone of voice.

"You often spoke of that conversation at the time. Do you think of it now, frequently?"

"Almost all the time mamma, for sometimes I feel as if I was going to die before long. Then I wonder all about death. But I think most frequently of the resurrection, and I thought I remembered that there was a great deal about it in the burial service. That is the reason I asked you to read it to me. Did you think it was strange mamma?"

“Not in you, my love,”—said Mrs. Morton.

“I wish Mr. Herbert would explain *this* text to me, as he did the others,” continued the little girl. “Mr. Herbert promised to come and talk with me before long.”

Now it very often happens, that the people we are thinking or talking about are near us. Helen had scarcely finished speaking when Mrs. Morton saw Mr. Herbert coming up the carriage road. Helen was delighted, and went to the door herself to welcome him.

Poor child! It made her mamma quite sorrowful to see the difference in her manner. Once she would have bounded through the hall so quickly. Now she stepped slowly,—feeling before her as she went along, lest anything should be in her way.

Mr. Herbert seemed very happy this afternoon. He said he had come to talk

a little with Helen, and then he wished to see Mrs. Morton. So they went into the study, and Mrs. Morton left them alone a little while, for she knew Helen would speak more openly on the subject that had been in her mind.

Yet do not understand me that Helen was afraid of her mother, or concealed anything from her. It was quite the contrary. Mrs. Morton had always taught her daughter to come to her with all the pleasures and all the griefs of her short life. Helen had been sent to school a few months the summer before, and while there the little girls had sometimes laughed at her for this very thing. Some children have a great many little tales about each other, or about their teachers, that they call *secrets*; they make the rest promise "never to tell as long as they live." I have heard little girls say, "I hope to die if I do."

Now this is wicked as well as foolish,



for they often *do* repeat these very things even after so solemn a promise as the one I have mentioned. Helen always said "May I tell my mother?" and she never would listen if they said "no." Some of the girls laughed at this, but Mrs. Morton said that Helen was right. Anything that could not be repeated to her, was not proper for them to tell among themselves.

So Helen was not afraid of her mamma, but she was sometimes timid when she was speaking about things she did not quite understand. Mrs. Morton knew this, and she thoughtfully left the room, and went to look after dear little Louise.

"Do you remember explaining to me what the resurrection meant?" said Helen to Mr. Herbert. She had taken her favorite place in the low window-seat, and Mr. Herbert had "papa's great study chair."

"That was three or four years ago,

was it not?" answered Mr. Herbert.—  
"Have you remembered it all this while?"

"Oh, yes sir, I think of it often. Mamma has been reading the burial service to me this afternoon. It says, 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.' Won't you please to explain that to me too."

Mr. Herbert was astonished that the mind of his little friend was fixed upon such serious thoughts. She looked very beautiful sitting there, with the light falling upon her, softened as it came through the crimson curtains. Her poor eyes were cast down, and her hands were folded gently before her. Mr. Herbert thought she was like a picture he had once seen of the child Samuel waiting to hear again the voice of God. She had the same soft curls, and her face was so calm, and peaceful. She seemed so pale too in that crimson light, that Mr. Her-





bert was almost startled, as he looked fondly down upon her.

“Do you know that the whole essence or sum, of our Christian belief, is contained in these few words,” said he. “What do you understand by the first part of the verse, ‘As in Adam all die.’”

“The very first part of the Bible tells us about that, does it not sir?”

Well what does it tell us there. Can you remember it?”

“First about the creation, that is the very beginning. God created a man to be like HIM, after he had made a beautiful garden for the man to live in.”

“Who was this man?”

“Adam, he was called. And then he was alone in all this lovely world. He must have wanted some one to be with him very much I should think. I would not like to be the only person in the world, even if I could see, and had everything in it for my own.”

“God saw that at once, did he not? how lonely Adam would be.”

“Yes sir. That is the next part of it. When Adam was asleep God made a beautiful lady, to stay with him always. How surprised he must have been, I told mamma, when he awoke on that day!”

“Then were they very happy together?”

“Yes, I suppose so. The Bible does not say anything about that. But we are always happy when we get what we wish for, I think.”

“Not always, my little girl. Though we never look for disappointment.”

“Why I'm sure I never could be a bit unhappy again, if I had *my* wish. But it's no use to hope for *that*, I know,” and Helen looked more grave than ever.

Mr. Herbert knew what the wish was, though she did not speak it. He thought

best not to let her mind go back to her blindness, so he said—

“Did they always live in that beautiful garden?”

“The Bible says there was only one tree in all the place, God did not want them to touch. But you know all about this, Mr. Herbert; a good deal better than I do!”

“You seem to understand it very well Helen. I am not sure I know the story any better than you, and it pleases me to see how well you recollect it.”

“Mamma has read it to Willie and to me, a great many times. I read it myself, when I could see. But somehow I remember things better now, than I did then.”

“And now let us go on with the story about Adam and Eve.”

“Well sir, there was this one tree they must not touch, God said.

Eve *did*, and then Adam eat the fruit too."

"Was that the way they died? Was the fruit of the tree poisonous?"

"Not that, as mamma explained it to us. She said that God was so displeased about their disobeying Him, that he punished them, by death at last. Nothing had died before, in that lovely place. None of the birds, or the flowers either, I suppose. Don't you think Eve was very foolish, just for such a little thing to displease God so? I have thought sometimes, that I would not have done it, if I had wanted to ever so much."

Helen was like a great many people we have heard talk about the faults of others. It is very easy when we have never been tempted to do wrong, to say how we would act if we were. But when the temptation comes—we sin quite as easily as they, perhaps more easily.

Mr. Herbert thought something like



this while Helen was speaking ; but he smiled pleasantly, and said it was very natural, to think we would have done differently, now that we know the terrible consequences of that sin. “ Was it just the death of our bodies ? ” he asked, “ that God sent as the punishment.”

Helen had somehow never thought of *this* before. She seemed to remember a part of a verse she had read—“ *Sin came into the world, and death by sin.* ” She all at once saw that eternal death was meant there. That state of the soul's endless suffering,—which is so much worse than the death and decay of our bodies.

“ Oh Mr. Herbert,” she said suddenly, “ This first sin is the reason we *all* sin, and I remember a text in mamma's little book,—“ *The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die.* ” Is that it ? Does it mean our souls are punished forever, and ever, because we do wrong, and we

would not do so, if Adam had not commenced it?"

"God's spirit has guided you rightly to the proper meaning, my dear little girl,"—replied Mr. Herbert. "Now I see that you understand rightly, the first part of the verse you repeated, '*In Adam all die.*'"

But it had grown almost dark while they were talking, and Mrs. Morton had returned to the room. So Mr. Herbert said he would explain the rest, the next time that he came to pay them a visit.

He had something to say to Mrs. Morton now. "Quite a little secret," he told Helen. So she rose from her low seat in the window, and thanking him for talking so long with her, she went to the nursery.

She knew if it had been proper she would have been allowed to hear what Mr. Herbert was going to say. But she had not that bad, and disagreeable fault

of too great *curiosity*, so she did not even wonder what the secret was. Willie had gone out to walk with his papa. So she sat down quietly by Jane who was holding Louise, and began to tell her what they had been talking of. Helen found she could remember almost all their conversation, and Jane seemed very much interested.

Mr. Herbert's secret came into her mind only once again. It was when they were going into tea that evening. Mr. Herbert could not stay, and as he bade Mrs. Morton good night she said—“Be assured your confidence has given me a great deal of pleasure. May it be a very happy Christmas to you if I do not see you again before you leave.”

Mr. Herbert thanked her, and Mr. Morton said,—“Do not forget that you have a standing engagement to dine with us on that day.”

## CHAPTER VII.

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### MR. HERBERT'S SECRET DISCLOSED.

THE day before Christmas was a very busy day at Mrs. Morton's.

The house was put thoroughly in order. Pies, puddings, and cakes were baked, the silver was all nicely cleaned, and this was done before dinner. Then Mrs. Morton and Jane dressed the mirrors, and the picture frames, with delicate wreaths of evergreens, and the window curtains were looped back with small branches of fir, and cedar. Helen assisted them. She held the scissors, and

the twine for them, and was as happy and cheerful, as if she could see how nicely it looked, when it was all arranged.

Then several large baskets were packed. There were chickens in one, and cakes in another, and warm stockings and shoes in another. These Mr. Morton, and John the coachman, took charge of, and distributed their contents, in several poor families, that could not afford poultry and cakes themselves. Mrs. Morton always remembered the poor, amid the plenty which God had given her.

There was still another basket waiting for John when he returned. This was to go to the rectory, and what Helen thought very strange, John brought up the sleigh, and Mrs. Morton went with the basket.

Helen wondered at it, for she knew Mr. Herbert had been gone from home ever since the day after she had last seen

him. Her mamma promised to be home in time for tea, and meanwhile Helen was to amuse Willie, and keep him from doing any mischief.

They got along very pleasantly together, and just before the tea-bell rang, Mrs. Morton returned.

“They have come,” said she as Helen’s papa helped her out of the sleigh. “And I’m sure we shall like her very much.” Then she told Helen Mr. Herbert’s grand secret, which was discovered at last. He had been away to bring home *a bride*, to the dear little parsonage, that had always looked as if it needed a young mistress.

She was very graceful and gentle Mrs. Morton said. Not exactly beautiful, but very loveable, with dark brown eyes, and a child-like mouth. Mrs. Burnet, who had long been Mr. Herbert’s house-keeper, was delighted with her, and that was a great deal, for Mrs. Burnet, was

“prim”—as Helen used to say, and did not often take fancies to people. Then they seemed to love each other so truly, Mrs. Morton declared, the house and husband seemed made for little Mrs. Herbert, and Mrs. Herbert for them.

They had been married in the city two days before, and Mrs. Herbert's brother, a young physician, had accompanied them home. They would all dine with Mrs. Morton the next day, and Dr. Price with several other people had been asked to meet them.

Mr. Morton had some news too. While his wife was at the parsonage, a letter had come, from her sister Mrs. Lee, to say she would pass the holidays with them. They might expect her this very evening as the letter had been delayed. Mrs. Lee's husband had returned from Europe more than two years before. God had given them another little daughter in place of Mary. Her name was Grace,

and she was about as old as Louise. They were all coming, and Helen began to think there was quite too much good news, for it to be true.

She had scarcely time to think how strange it would seem to have a *Mrs.* Herbert,—when a sleigh drew up to the door, and out of the soft warm furs, came Mrs. Lee, the baby, the nurse, and finally, Mr. Lee appeared, when he had assisted all the rest.

It was so delightful! Everybody was busy until all the unmuffling was done. Willie was quite covered with shawls and tippets, which he insisted on carrying up stairs himself. Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Lee were delighted to meet again, and Helen forgot that she could not see her aunt and uncle, it was so pleasant to hear them speak, and know that they were near her.

Mrs. Lee looked sad, when she first saw Helen's cautious hesitating move-



ments, for she had not been with her before, since her illness. Uncle Lee said "poor little creature!" but he did not say it aloud lest it should give her pain. The most wonderful thing of all was, that Jane declared Grace and Louise "knew each other at once,"—which was scarcely possible as the baby cousins had never met before. But it was amusing to see the little things, smile and "coo" to each other, as if they actually *were* re-establishing an acquaintance.

Everybody seemed too happy to eat much that night. There was a great deal to be said about all that had happened, since they had met last. Their arrival was such an agreeable surprise! Mrs. Morton said it was the best Christmas present she could have had. That remark gave a new turn to Willie's thoughts. He began wondering what he would find for a Christmas gift in the morning. Helen smiled very archly, for

she was thinking of the nice blue and white tippet he would find under his pillow, and then too she knew of some mysterious packages that had arrived, directed to her mamma.

They all joined most heartily in the prayer of thanksgiving that evening. They felt that God had been very kind indeed to them all. Helen was the only sufferer in the room. But she had become patient and cheerful. She sometimes thought Mr. Herbert was right. Her blindness might prove a blessing after all. Now and then the old feeling of sullen murmuring would come back. At such times she remembered Mr. Herbert's advice, and her simple prayers seemed to be granted.

There was none of this discontent tonight however, and when Mrs. Morton came to her room to kiss her good night, she whispered, "I am so very happy!"

She called her mamma back once, as

she was leaving the room, but it was only to say—"Do you think dear Mrs. Herbert will ever love me?"

Mrs. Morton wondered if anybody could help loving the patient, affectionate little girl. But she did not say so.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

WILLIE was actually the first person up in the house on Christmas morning. The way it happened was this. Just about day break, he was turning in bed, half awake, when his pillow slipped to the floor,—and what should he see but just such a blue and white tippet as he had been wanting ever since the snow came.

He was broad awake in an instant, and then he was so delighted he could not go to sleep again. Helen must be told of it, and then he ran away without

stopping to dress himself that he might wish mamma "Merry Christmas."

Presently the household were all astir. Willie's example being thought an excellent one for so busy a day. Every one looked smiling, and in every hall, you might have heard the salutation of "Merry Christmas"—as one and another, met for the first time. Jane assisted Helen to dress,—and told her that it was a bright clear day, with the sky almost as blue as if it were summer. The snow was sparkling in the sunshine, and the sleigh bells soon began to sound merrily, as they passed the house.

There was a particularly nice breakfast, and every one seemed to enjoy it wonderfully. Uncle Lee had such curious stories to tell of Christmas day in Germany. The children almost wished they were living in Germany, it must have been so pleasant. Willie forgot to wonder what his mamma would give

him from those large parcels, and Helen did not think of Mrs. Herbert once.

After prayers the mystery was all out. There was such a variety of gifts found upon the sofa table in the parlor. Toys for Willie and the two babies. A book for Helen with the beautiful poem her mother had read to her, and Mrs. Morton whispered as she put it into her hand, "I will read it to you any time my love."

Mrs. Lee had not forgotten them,—and her husband had brought some of the curious European toys he had purchased when abroad. The servants had each some present, which the children were allowed to give them. There was a beautiful prayer-book for Jane,—Helen had heard her wish for a new one some time before. There was also a curiously bound volume, which all said was very elegant. It was a book of Christmas Carols, *illuminated* as it is called, that is printed in different coloured inks. Red

and blue and green, with a border of flowers and fruit finely painted, around every page. This was to be Helen's bridal gift to Mrs. Herbert.

Willie could hardly get over the excitement, even when they were going to church. The children rode in Uncle Lee's sleigh, which Willie thought was much nicer than their own, particularly the furs, which happened to be almost exactly alike. They all enjoyed the sleighing, as it was rarely good in this mild climate.

The church looked very beautifully. Mrs. Lee described it to Helen as they rode home. There were long wreaths of evergreens twined around the pillars, and branches of fir and cedar, made a kind of arch over each door. A motto from the Bible, might be traced around the front of the gallery in letters of vivid green; and a cross, the symbol of our faith, covered in the same way was rear-

ed in the chancel. Smaller wreaths dotted with crimson berries, were twined about the railings of the chancel,—and the white linen cloth that covered the sacramental table, was broidered with small myrtle leaves, of shining green.

Mr. Herbert's sermon was plain but very interesting to Helen. She remembered one thing particularly. He said at its commencement, that it was meet Christmas should be the festival of childhood, for it was the joyful anniversary of that day in which our Lord became as one of them.

At three o'clock the company began to assemble for dinner. Dr. and Mrs. Price, came first, for they were old friends of Mrs. Lee's, and there was much to be said. Amelia, Helen's playmate came with them, and several other ladies brought their children, so there was quite a child's party in the study. Little Louise and Grace, in their



long cambric robes, were brought in, and all the ladies stopped to admire the little creatures.

After a while Mrs. Morton came to the study, and Helen's heart beat fast, for there was a light step she had never heard before, and she knew it must be Mrs. Herbert's.

"This is my little one"—said Mrs. Morton, and then Mrs. Herbert stooped down to kiss her,—and spoke kindly in a low sweet voice. She put her hand upon Helen's curls,—and the child could not resist kissing it as it afterwards clasped her own. It was so delicate, and small. Helen had no longer any fear of Mrs. Herbert,—and when she gave her the book of Christmas Carols,—she whispered, "I am sure you will love me."

Mrs. Herbert looked fondly down though Helen could not see the glance, and said, "I could not help loving you little Helen."

After they had gone, there was a merry play going on among the children. Jane was excellent in a new play, and directed it for them. While they were all laughing and dancing as gay children do, the door was again opened and Mr. Morton came. Helen ran to him, but she drew back as she felt there was a stranger in the room.

The gentleman spoke to her, and his voice was very much like Mrs. Herbert's. Then she knew it was her brother Dr. Harrison who was going to pass the winter with his sister. He had chosen this small quiet town to reside in while he pursued some very difficult studies, in which he was engaged.

“Will you come to the nursery with us a moment” said Mr. Morton “Jane will take care of your little friends, and we will not keep you long.” Helen wondered what it was for, but she never asked her father's reasons, for wishing her to do

anything, and so she put her hand in Dr. Harrison's, and they walked across the hall.

“Dr. Harrison wishes to examine these poor little eyes one moment my daughter,”—said Mr. Morton. “He will not give you any pain.”

Helen felt perfectly willing he should do so, for he seemed as gentle as his sister, and he chatted pleasantly to her all the while,—now and then asking some question about her eyes.

Then he stroked back her curls, and called her “a patient child.” Helen began to think she should like him almost as well as Mr. Herbert, when they walked back to the study again.

After the grown people had dined, the children had a nice dinner with plenty of nuts and raisins at dessert. Then they went into the parlour where one of the ladies played the piano for them. They remembered that Christmas even-

ing for a long time. Amelia Price often said it was the pleasantest visit she had ever paid.

Helen had another little chat with Mrs. Herbert, and her husband came while they stood together near the window. It seemed very odd to hear Mr. Herbert call any one "my love"—though he said that only once. He usually called his wife, "Isabel," for that was her name. Dr. Harrison took pains to come and bid Helen good night before they left, and she told her mother so oddly that her aunt laughed outright—"It was very good in Mr. Herbert to *marry such kind people.*"

Willie had dropped fast asleep long before the company left, and Jane carried him to bed. One after another drove away, at last Helen kissed Amelia Price, and asked her to come and visit her as often as possible. Mrs. Morton was glad to hear this, for Helen had refused to let

her playmates visit her from the time she had first become blind.

When they sat down to "talk the day all over"—Mr. Morton took Helen upon his knee, and asked her if he could trust her with some news,—that might make her very happy, and might end in bitter disappointment.

Helen promised to bear the disappointment if it came,—and said "I think I can bear anything now that I have got used to being blind."

What was her delight when her papa then told her, that Dr. Harrison had expressed a hope that her sight might be entirely restored. He was an *oculist*; that is a surgeon, who studies most carefully all diseases of the eye,—and how they can be remedied. Dr. Price did not understand many things that had been recently discovered, with regard to these matters, and had not dared to venture upon an operation. They had always

hoped that it might be performed,—and had intended going to the city in the spring, for the purpose of consulting other physicians. But Mrs. Morton thought it best Helen should not know of this lest it should make her impatient, and end in a worse disappointment.

Dr. Harrison was very much interested in Helen before he saw her. Mr. Herbert had often spoken of her,—to the lady who was now his wife. Her brother had determined to offer his services if Mr. Morton would trust him,—and if Helen consented to the operation.

Mr. Morton then explained to his little daughter how difficult, and painful it would be. He told her that she would be obliged to take a quantity of disagreeable medicine first,—and then after all there was only the *possibility*, not the *certainty* of a cure. But Helen gave her consent at once. She thought no pain could be greater than the pain of mind

she would have all her life if she could not see, and she promised to bear the disappointment patiently if it should come. She was glad Dr. Harrison would be the surgeon, for he was so gentle, and spoke so kindly she was not at all afraid of him.

“I thought” dear mamma, said she that night,—“of the Blind man in the Bible. He was willing to try anything that could possibly help him,—even when the Saviour did not tell him, to hope. I wish I had a great deal of faith like the blind man. I do think God loves me more now-a-days,—I mean that I can feel it, not that He did not love me always. How very good I ought to be all my life, if He *does* give me my sight again,”—and so the little girl talked on until she fairly fell asleep.

Her mamma, stooped down to kiss her, as she was lying there in such

peaceful rest. And then she knelt by the bedside.

She prayed, oh, so earnestly, that God would bless the means they were now going to employ. That if it was His will her daughter might receive her sight. Then she dedicated her once more to God's service. She prayed that the child's simple petition for faith might be granted,—and that even if recovery was denied, she might through this faith behold and trust in the Saviour of all mankind.



## CHAPTER IX.

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### CHRIST THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

FROM this time Helen was observed to be less steadily patient than she had been of late. She tried to help this restless spirit but she could not always do so. Sometimes she was almost sorry there had been any hope of a cure, she knew the disappointment would be so bitter if she were not relieved.

Then again she would remember that she could be no worse, and the hope was something.

Mr and Mrs. Lee had gone home after passing a very pleasant week with them. The house seemed lonely for a time, and Jane said she was sure Louise missed little Grace.

Mrs. Herbert came to see them often. In fact Mrs. Morton began to call her "Isabel" as if they had known each other all their lives. Helen had no greater pleasure than her visits, and anticipated them with delight. Most frequently Dr. Harrison accompanied her. He tried to win Helen's confidence, in every way, for he knew that the success of the operation would depend upon her fortitude. He had decided it should take place early in March, and in February Helen was to commence taking medicine, just as if she were really ill. All this was told her at once.

So January passed away ; Helen knitting and learning her lessons as before

Christmas. She would often sit in the study by herself, and think about all she would be obliged to suffer, and sometimes she dreaded the pain very much. She also thought more about God, and Heaven than she had once done. Still she could not quite understand how she was to be a Christian, and “renounce the vain pomp and glory of the world” and “not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and continue his faithful soldier and servant unto her life’s end.” This had been promised for her at her baptism she knew,—for she remembered the christening of Louise, which had taken place not long before.

She had asked her mother then, if she was expected to do this.—Mrs. Morton answered, that with God’s help, she hoped her daughters would both be able to, when they should be old enough to understand what was thus required of them.

One day when her mamma had gone out to make some visits, she was sitting alone with her mind full of these thoughts. If she had not been blind she would probably have been engaged in some lively play, or reading a pleasant story book. As it was, the medicine ordered by Dr. Harrison had already made her weaker than she had been before, and although not exactly ill, she did not feel like romping in the nursery.

She sat on Willie's ottoman by the study fire, and had laid her head on the cushions of her mamma's own rocking chair.

Some one tapped at the door, and as she started she said "come in,"—for she thought Jane had come to call her.

But it was not Jane, it was Mr. Herbert, and he told her that his wife had gone with her mamma to see some poor persons. He was to wait there until her return, and in the meantime he pro-

posed that they should finish their conversation about the text in the burial service.

Helen repeated it again. “*And as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.*”

They had now come to the second part. Mr. Herbert recounted all they had said before, which you will find in Chapter 6th. Then he went on with the history of the world as you have read it in the Old Testament. He told Helen how the people grew worse and worse, and then the flood came and swept off all but one family who were saved in the ark. Even after that, the sin which is born in every man, soon showed itself in rebellion against their Maker.

Then God chose a certain nation to preserve his worship in the midst of all this wickedness. He watched over them for many hundreds of years, and made

them great and powerful. Their prophets foretold that in after years one should be born, who should be the Redeemer of the world. We have several such prophecies in the Old Testament, but Isaiah foretells it most plainly.

In the tenth chapter of his prophecies we find this verse.

*“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father,—the Prince of Peace.”*

In the eleventh chapter he says, *“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots;*

*And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord;*

*And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek."*

Mr. Herbert read these verses, from the large family Bible, and then he went on with the history of the Jews.

He told Helen, how madly wicked they grew: that after all God had done for them they made idols of wood and stone and worshipped senseless images, just as the heathen in India do now. It was all in vain that they were warned by the holy men, He had chosen by his prophets. At last He punished them for their continued disobedience. They were carried away from the beautiful country God had given them; and were made the servants of more powerful nations. Afterwards a part repented truly, and were restored to their own country:—but at length even the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as well as all Judea, were governed by a foreign nation,

and their only hope was the coming of this REDEEMER, the MESSIAH, as they called Him.

When the long looked for Prince of Peace came at last, many of them refused to acknowledge Him. They had not expected that one to whom so much power was given, should come among them so humbly. They had looked for an earthly King; one who should raise their fallen nation to the glory that had once been theirs.

But he came as a little child,—the son of a poor carpenter. His cradle was a manger,—and his home a humble cottage. They refused to believe the story of the shepherds, that his birth had been announced by a choir of angels. If they heard the story of the Wise men who came from the East, guided by a star moving before them through the sky,—they thought them madmen or fools.

“I have often thought” said Mr. Her-



bert, musingly, "of that beautiful star, moving slowly before those venerable men. It almost seems to me a symbol of the light of nature that guided ancient philosophers to believe in the being of the living God. But it did not lead them to a Saviour:" and then he repeated the text—

*"For blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them."*

"But you will not understand this just now my little girl," he continued, "so we will return to the story of the Saviour's birth.

"You know that those who now bear the name of Jews, still look for another Messiah, and refuse to believe in the son of the carpenter.

It was thus that the Son of God came to save a guilty world. In his life of deep humility, and benevolence, He left to us a pattern or example. By his cruel death He made atonement for the sin of all mankind, so that all who will believe in Him and obey his commandments shall be saved."

Here Mr. Herbert opened the Bible again and read from the New Testament,

*"While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*

*We were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son.*

*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

*That as sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."*

"What I have read to you" said Mr. Herbert is from the fifth chapter of

Romans. I did not read directly along but choose those texts, I thought you would understand best, and were more suited to what we have been talking about.

“Do you understand the first text now?”

Helen hardly heard the question. She was thinking how wonderful God's love and the Saviour's compassion, were. That God should care so much for people who had always disobeyed Him. She felt as if she wished to go at once to this kind friend, to kneel at his feet, and tell him that she thanked him with her whole heart for coming into the world to save sinners.

“I wish I could please and obey Him always,” thought the little girl, “I hope He will know how very much I wish to be good, and how hard I will try to be more humble, and patient, just as He was.”

And the Saviour must have known it. He reads all our thoughts, and he is as much pleased at our desire to do rightly, as he is pained when we neglect his wishes.

There was a different expression on Helen's face when she turned towards Mr. Herbert. He felt at once, something of the thoughts that were in her mind.

He laid his hand upon her head and said—"Remember that this kind Saviour gave a special blessing to little children: to all those who seek him early."

"There is something else in the burial service Mr. Herbert," said Helen when she spoke again. "Our Saviour says '*I am the resurrection and the life.*' There is some more I do not remember; then it says '*And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.*' When I was a very little girl I used to think it meant, we should never die *really*, that is, be put in a coffin and buried."

“Do you think so now Helen?”

“Oh, no sir, not now, because grand-mamma was a Christian, and her grave is in the church yard,—But I *used* to think so, and that was the reason I wanted to be one too, because I was afraid to die.”

“Do you ever wish to be an earnest and faithful Christian now? Is that the reason, rather? For you once told me you wished to be a true follower of Him who died for us,”

“I wish I was sir, all the time.\* I have been wishing so all the while we have been talking. But it is more because, I would like the Saviour to know how much I love him. *How much I wish I did*, I mean. The text means ‘life everlasting,’—does it not?”

“Certainly my child, and now can you understand how one can be dead to all appearance, and buried, yet alive in Christ?”

“I think I can. The soul never dies, —but it would have been suffering for ever and ever, if Christ had not made atonement.”

“And now the souls of those who live and believed on him, in this world, live and are happy in Heaven,” said Mr. Herbert. “Is that it?”

“I think so Mr. Herbert.”

“And what was the resurrection of our Saviour a type, or token of?”

“Will you please explain it to me,” said the little girl, for though she thought she understood it, she was not quite sure that she did.

“Was it not this, to prove that the power, or victory of Death was over? that its terrors could not frighten Christ's followers any more, because they hoped for “a glorious resurrection” at the last day? Do you remember what the Creed says about this?”

“I look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come"—repeated Helen solemnly.

"Yes," said Mr. Herbert—"there was no longer any doubt, of a life hereafter, that would repay them for all they had suffered here. Why do we celebrate Easter day?"

"In memory of the resurrection of our Saviour is it not?"

"Should you not think then, it ought to be the most joyful day in the Christian year?"

"What, happier than Christmas Day, when Christ was born!"

"I think so my dear child," answered Mr. Herbert. "The announcement of his birth was most joyful news. But then we have before us all that he had to suffer. The long and solemn fast of Lent, continuing forty days in memory of our Lord's temptation, as you know precedes the festival of Easter. During its services we review all these sufferings,

and think of his painful death : that death borne for our sakes. After this period of gloom, comes the day of gladness and rejoicing. We have mourned the death, and the burial, and now all hearts look for the resurrection. The work of the Redeemer is completed. No more shame, no more agony. The sacrifice for the sin of the world is accepted. Our redemption is secure. Our Lord has triumphed over the last terror that can alarm the christian soul,—*the grave*. Surely Easter morning should be the happiest of the year.”

Mr. Herbert almost seemed to forget that he was speaking aloud. He seemed wrapt in thought, and Helen sat quite still for some time after he had ended.

Her little heart was full. For the first time she felt the beauty of the Saviour's life, the mercy of his atonement. She was grieved when she recollected how often she had acted in direct disobedience



to his commands; and she silently asked for pardon.

She would not have called it praying for her lips did not even move,—but a humble and sincere desire was in her heart, that she might never offend so again.

They were both recalled from this deep thought by hearing Mrs. Morton's voice in the hall. Mrs. Herbert was with her, and they came into the study.

Mr. Herbert had a great deal to ask about the poor woman they had been to visit, and after a little conversation his wife reminded him that it was quite time they were at home. So Helen bade them good bye, loving both, better than she had ever done before

## CHAPTER X.

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### THE DAY OF FEARS.

ABOUT a week after the conversation in the last chapter, the solemn services of Lent commenced. Helen did not see much of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert, now, but Dr. Harrison called in every day. He was in the habit of taking long walks, and he always stopped at Mrs. Morton's a few moments.

It was the second week in March. Already the snow had quite disappeared, and Willie said he was sure the crocuses, and hyacinths would be coming up in a

few days. Willie was now very busy, for he assisted the gardener, who was trimming the vines and tying up the rose bushes. At least Willie called it assisting, for he trundled his little wheel-barrow around from one walk to the other, and it was always full of something. Dead branches, or stones from the nicely gravelled path, was the usual load.

Dr. Harrison now began to talk of fixing a day for the operation upon Helen's eyes. Dr. Price was to assist, and her parents had the greatest confidence in both.

As the time drew near, Mrs. Morton became very anxious. She scarcely dared to hope for a cure, and she dreaded the effect a disappointment might have upon the health and disposition of her daughter. The day came and Helen was dressed long before the light.

She did not tell—even to her mamma, how much she dreaded the pain. She

had a feeling, that speaking of it would only increase her fear. But she had one friend to whom she could go. That one the Bible tells us is "a very present help, in trouble." She had risen so early that she might pray to Him.

She knelt by the bedside, and first thanking our Father in Heaven for the quiet sleep she had enjoyed; she asked for strength to bear all that should happen to her in the coming day. She prayed besides this, that God would enable her to bear the disappointment of total blindness, if it was His will. Helen had hardly allowed herself to hope it would prove otherwise.

Her mamma was surprised to find her so calm, when she came into the room, a little while afterwards. Helen spoke of what was going to happen, herself, and asked Mrs. Morton if she would be in the room with her. Dr. Price had thought it best that this should not be. It seem-

ed a great disappointment to Helen, but she tried to smile cheerfully.

You may be sure it was a sad morning at Mr. Morton's. Nobody ate any breakfast but Helen herself, and Willie, who did not know what was going to be done. He was very happy, for he had just been told that he was to pass the day with their old Nurse, Jane's mother. He liked to visit Nurse, for she was very fond of him, and allowed him to do pretty much as he chose. All the servants pitied poor Miss Helen, and while they were at breakfast one of them went into the study, and found that Dr. Harrison was already there, and there was a long table standing before the window, "quite as if something terrible was going to happen"—the girl said.

They had prayers in the dining room that morning,—and then Willie was sent away. Mrs. Morton went into the study with Helen, and Dr. Harrison chatted so

pleasantly, about his sister, and what they did when they were children, that she almost forgot anything unusual was the cause of his early visit. But when she heard Dr. Price's carriage drive up, she began to get a little frightened. Her mamma noticed that she grew pale, and whispered to her that her papa would be with her all the while.

I am not going to describe to you this delicate and painful operation. I hope none of you will ever have to pass through such a scene. Though if you knew all about it, and had seen the sharp knives and hooks, that are made to pierce the eye, as I have, you would wonder how Helen was so patient. She did not scream at all. Once she bit her lips, and moaned, "oh, mamma,"—and then she grew faint.

When she was better she found that it was her mamma's soft hand that held her own. Mrs. Morton had lingered near

the door, and heard the exclamation. So she came in and never heeded Dr. Price, who insisted that she was not strong enough to bear it. The least agitation on the part of the physician, or his attendant, has often proved very unfortunate. Dr. Price was afraid that Mrs. Morton would grow alarmed, and cause something of this kind.

But Mrs. Morton was a mother, and could be brave where her children were suffering. She did not leave Helen again. It was not a very long time it is true, yet it seemed so to them all. Not a word was said, and Dr. Harrison's face did not change its expression for many minutes at a time.

At length all was over. Helen pale and exhausted was removed to her mamma's own room, and her eyes were closely bandaged. It would be more than a week before they could tell whether there was any cure.

All this while the little girl would be obliged to stay in a dark room, most of the time in bed.

Dr. Harrison came in to see her after a little while, and ordered some drops that would quiet her. He told Mrs. Morton that he had never seen any person bear the operation so well. Dr. Price called her a little heroine, and said Amelia should come and pass the day with her as soon as she was well enough. Mrs. Morton wondered that she had been so brave, but Helen told her, after they had all gone how she had prayed in the morning; and when she was most alarmed, she tried to pray again.

Then she asked her mamma to kneel and thank God for helping her. Mrs. Morton did so, and added a petition that the end might be as they all wished.

After that, Helen had a comfortable sleep, and when she woke her papa was watching by her. He told her that she



must be very quiet, and not grow impatient to have the bandages taken off. Helen promised not to be, and then she fell asleep again, and dreamed that she saw her papa as plainly as ever in her life.

The next week passed very slowly. Willie was allowed to come in only once, early in the morning. Mrs. Herbert was not well and could not come out, as the weather was stormy, and Helen was often left by herself for hours together. At such times she would try to imagine how every thing would seem when she should be able to see again. Louise was brought to her one day, and as she passed her hands over the soft curls, that began to cluster about the baby's forehead, she fancied she could tell exactly how she looked.

Mrs. Morton went every evening, or rather afternoon, to church, and when she came home she read Helen the les-

sons for the day. Besides this, Dr. Harrison's visits were her greatest pleasure. He came every morning at ten o'clock, and Helen could tell his footstep, the moment he entered the hall.

One morning in the second week he removed the bandage a moment. He did not tell any of them that he intended to do so. Mrs. Morton was in the room, and sat very near the bed. As Helen felt the pressure removed from her eyes, she opened them quickly—and then threw her arms round her mamma's neck with a scream of joy. The room was dark, but Helen had seen her mamma quite distinctly.

*She was no longer blind!*

Dr. Harrison, seemed as happy as herself, though he insisted on replacing the bandage at once. He was afraid she would use her eyes too much, and so bring a return of the cataract. It was in vain she asked to be allowed to see him,

just one moment; she said she could thank him better.

Dr. Harrison laughed when she told him this, and said she was quite grateful enough already. He promised, however, that she should thank him in her own way, when he came the next morning, but he must hurry off now to carry the good news to the parsonage.

Helen was so excited about the certainty of being well again, that her mamma was almost afraid of a fever. She left her to get some composing drops,—and then Helen stole softly out of bed. When her mamma came back, she was surprised to find her kneeling. Helen afterwards told her that she felt directly that she ought to thank God, before Dr. Harrison, or any one else.

The good news spread over the house very quickly. Mr. Morton met Dr. Harrison, on his way home, and hardly stopped to tell him how grateful they should

ever be. It was a day of rejoicing. Willie came in from the garden with the first snow drops, in bloom, and when he said "poor Helen, I wish she could see how pretty they are—don't you mamma"—what was his surprise to hear her say, that Helen was no longer blind.

Willie would hardly believe it, until Helen herself told him it was so, and then he put the snow drops carefully in water, that she could see them the next day.

But the flowers were forgotten, for when Helen was permitted to use her eyes a little while, there were so many people to be looked at. First there was Mr. Morton, who had not changed in the least, and he smiled when she said she had expected he would be. It was only a few months since she had last seen them all, but it seemed like a great many years. Willie had altered though, he

had grown very much,—and Louise did not look a bit as she had fancied her.

Last of all Dr. Harrison came back into the room, and Helen for the first time felt afraid of him. She had not thought he was so tall and with such beautiful eyes. She thought she had never seen more beautiful eyes, or a pleasanter smile, and she amused them all by asking him “if Mrs. Herbert was half as handsome?”

After this she was allowed to have the bandage taken off entirely. Her mamma made a nice green silk shade,—and though the room was kept very dark, she could see every one that came in. She found Mrs. Herbert *was* quite as handsome as Dr. Harrison, their eyes were almost exactly alike. Oh, no one could tell how delightful it was to be able to see again! She was never tired of looking at her mamma, as she sat by

her side, and Mrs. Morton seemed almost as happy as her little daughter.

One day Dr. Harrison told her that if she chose, she could go out of the dark room the next day. It was the Wednesday before Easter. Helen knew this, and after Dr. Harrison had gone she told her mamma, that if she pleased, she would rather not go out of the room until Sunday morning. She said she would like to have Easter the happiest day in the year just as Mr. Herbert had said,—and if Dr. Harrison thought proper, she would like to go to church, even if she kept her eyes closed all the way. Mrs. Morton was pleased with this request singular as it seemed to Dr. Harrison; for she knew Helen had altered very much,—and why it was to her the happiest day of the year.

## CHAPTER XI.

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### EASTER DAY.

SUNDAY came. Mrs. Morton was delighted to find it so pleasant a morning. She lost no time in going to Helen's room, where she found Jane had already dressed the little girl.

There was no one else down stairs it was so early, as they entered the study together. I think I told you the windows came down to the floor, in that pleasant room. The light curtains were now floating back in the soft spring breeze, and for the first time in many months, Helen

looked out upon the blue sky. The prettiest nook in the garden, was just before the study window. The rose trees were covered with bright green leaves, and on the sweet briar, you could already see the little buds. The hyacinths were in bloom, the blue lillies, and the snow drops were blossoming along the edge of the walk. Then the grass was bright, and shining with dew; altogether, it was an uncommonly pleasant day for April, even in the mild climate in which they lived.

Little birds sang in the tall elms,—and the fruit trees were covered with blossoms. Some looking like a white cloud, and others were a delicate pink.

There was a glimpse of the river too. It was blue and calm, and the sunshine sparkled upon the quiet tide.

Have you ever been ill a long time, and confined in a dark close room? If you have been, you can tell a little of the



pleasure, with which Helen saw all this. But you must have been blind, to understand it fully.

It seemed as if she would never be tired with looking at this lovely scene. At last she turned to her mamma and said—"I had forgotten that the world was so beautiful."

Her papa was just entering the room, and heard this. He kissed her affectionately, and then they sat down together near the window. Helen found that her eyes were still too weak to look out where the sunshine fell, long at a time.

"I am so glad I waited till Easter morning," said she. "I shall remember this as the happiest day of my life. I wonder if the world looked as beautiful to the Saviour when he rose from the dead."

"I fear not," said Mr. Morton. He could see the sin and ingratitude of man, amid all the pure creations of His Power

He knew that it would become more and more defiled, until it needed to be purified by fire. And then he had before Him the glories of the Heavenly home, to which he was so soon to return. This world would seem very poor and dark in comparison."

Willie was very much delighted when he found that Helen was to attend church with them that day.

He brought her bonnet himself, and insisted on leading her. Helen was careful to keep the thick green veil over her face. Besides this she still wore the silk shade, her mamma had made for her.

She could scarcely believe her recovery was real. She caught a glimpse now and then of familiar trees, and lanes, and she wondered, if it was not all a happy dream. When they came to the church, her heart was full of thankfulness, and when service commenced she

joined most earnestly in the Psalms for Easter morning.

Instead of the usual anthem, the choir began to chant these verses from the New Testament.

*Christ our passover is sacrificed for us ; therefore let us keep the feast.*

*Not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

I. Cor. v. 7.

*Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over him.*

*For in that he died, he died unto sin once ; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. vi. 9.*

*Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.*

*For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* I. Cor. xv. 20.

It seemed so strange to hear these very verses chanted. It brought back to her mind the conversation with Mr. Herbert, and now she could see him, standing before her, and joining in the chant. He looked more "heavenly" than ever, that was Helen's description of him,—and indeed the signet, of that "peace which passeth all understanding" seemed impressed upon his broad, open forehead. There was Mrs. Herbert too. Helen had never seen her in church before. She sat in the large square pew near the pulpit, and seemed to be very happy, as she listened to her husband's voice leading the prayer of his people.

Dr. Harrison sat in the same pew. Helen was sorry to notice that he did not seem interested at all, but looked about the church with a careless air, quite unlike the devotion of his sister. Once he

caught Helen's eye, and almost nodded to her as he smiled. But the little girl looked very grave, and did not glance toward him again.

How natural it was after the sermon, to look around the church, and see every thing just as she recollected it. The old sexton was going softly about, as if he was afraid to hear his own footsteps. The faces she remembered were everywhere around her; and Amelia Price and her mamma waited in the porch until they came out.

More than one friend of Mrs. Morton's stopped as they left the church, to kiss Helen, and tell her how happy they were to hear that she could see again. So it happened that almost every one had left the church yard, before they entered it. Helen saw that her papa was still talking with Dr. Price,—and she asked her mamma to walk on to Annie's grave. Willie staid with the gentlemen.

It was a long time since she had seen that low mound. They stood silently, for both were thinking of many things. There was a little lamb, cut from the purest white marble, at the head of Annie's last resting place. Helen thought it was the most beautiful monument they could have chosen, for she remembered that Mr. Herbert had told her, they hoped Annie was one of the lambs, the Good Shepherd had taken to his bosom.

How much Helen had altered since Mr. Herbert had first explained to her the meaning of the resurrection, on that very spot. You never would have known her to be the same child. She was now much taller, and was thin and pale; but she was more beautiful, for there was an expressive, serious sweetness upon her face, that had not been there before her illness.

So thought Mr. Herbert as he came

towards her. She put her hand in his and said, "This is a very happy day."

"I suppose so, my little girl," he replied, "as it is the first time for so many months that you have looked out upon the world."

"It is not so much that sir, but I am thinking all the time that it is almost like coming from the dead, to be with the dear people again. It brings the Saviour's resurrection into my mind, and how much he suffered for us. I wonder I never thought about these things before."

"When you were well, you were busy at work and play all the while. Perhaps that is the reason. God may have sent you blindness to give you time to think, and call off your attention from all other things."

"So it seemed to me this morning, Mr. Herbert. Then I wondered how I could ever have been so miserable as I was at

first. Perhaps it *was* a blessing after all, though it is very easy to say so, now I am well. But I do believe if God should make me blind again, I could bear it patiently."

"I hope you will not be tried," my dear, said Mr. Herbert.

"I don't believe God ever does anything that is not best for us, do you Mr. Herbert, if we could only understand it all?—We shall, some of these days, perhaps."

"The Bible assures us that we shall;" and Mr. Herbert wondered as he spoke, how much the child seemed already to understand of the mysteries of God's Providence.

"She has been taught by the Holy Spirit in truth,"—thought he; and then he could not help putting his hand upon her head, as she stood looking up into his face, and saying softly "*Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.*"



Helen felt strangely happy, though not gay, and she wondered when she saw tears in her mamma's eyes. Mrs. Herbert looked grave too, when she kissed the little girl, as she said good bye.

We also, you and I dear children,—must part, at the church yard-gate, with Helen Morton.

I should like nothing better than to tell you more about her. How she grew to love her Saviour more, and tried to follow his example. But at present I cannot do this. I can only ask God's blessing on this little history, and upon you all.

May you also be taught of the Spirit, but may the lesson come in love, and if it please our Heavenly Father, not through suffering. Remember that the same friend who has declared, "*I am the resurrection and the life*"—first said—

*Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.*











MAR 1 - 1951

